

THE GREAT "RACE" TO "DISCOVER" RAINBOW NATURAL BRIDGE IN 1909

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ABSTRACT

Orthodox history has it that Rainbow Bridge, the world's largest natural stone span, was first seen by literate whites on August 14, 1909, on an expedition consisting of the rival but combined parties of University of Utah archaeologists Byron Cummings and U. S. government surveyor William Boone Douglass. After a difficult journey to discover the bridge, the Cummings group and Douglass each claimed the credit, and the controversy as to "who was first" has continued to the present. There are contradictions and inconsistencies in eyewitness reports, and this paper reconstructs, to the extent possible, how John and Louisa Wetherill heard of Rainbow Bridge from Indians; how Cummings and Douglass learned of it; the actual events of the 1909 journeys to and from the bridge; and the attitudes and behaviors of the disputants before, during, and after the expedition. The article also presents evidence that neither Cummings nor Douglass was "first," that in fact the Wetherills had visited Rainbow Bridge months previous but had kept the trip a secret in order to let Cummings think he was the first white ever to see this natural wonder. There also is reason to believe that Rainbow Bridge had been seen (but not formally reported) decades earlier by prospectors, cowboys, and perhaps others.

Rainbow Natural Bridge, Utah, is the acknowledged premier example of its kind, being a feature not only of extreme beauty but also of great size, its smoothly curved 290-foot-high opening spanning a space 275 feet across (Vreeland 1976:56; Anonymous 1979; for a general discuss of the feature, see Jett 1980). Despite, or because of, its isolation in the rugged slickrock and canyon country between Navajo Mountain and Glen Canyon, the bridge has been the focus of more than one dispute during the decades since it was first brought to the world's attention in 1909. The most recent controversy relates to the waters of the Lake Powell reservoir backing up beneath the bridge, along with increased tourist visitation and visitors' lack of respectful behavior toward this Indian sacred place. An issue of longer standing has to do with the priority of "discovery" of this natural wonder (Barnes 1987:64-7). It is the older controversy with which this narrative is concerned.

PAIUTE AND NAVAJO KNOWLEDGE OF RAINBOW BRIDGE

Prehistoric native peoples of the region undoubtedly knew of the bridge, and the Anasazi may have established shrines adjacent to it (Jett 1973:133-135). Their successors were the San Juan Southern Paiute, who were, in turn, increasingly encroached upon by Navajos expanding westward during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Though they undoubtedly knew the bridge, the Paiute apparently had no particular religious feelings about the landmark other than what certain individuals adopted from the Navajo, who came to consider it holy (Masland 1962:23; Jett 1973:135-141; Atene, interview, 5-12-90). The story of the Navajo discovery and subsequent veneration of Rainbow Bridge was salvaged from obscurity by Karl Luckert (1977), in connection with the recording of Navajo religious beliefs about the Navajo

Mountain area of the Utah-Arizona borderlands.

In 1863 and 1864, United States troops led by Colonel Christopher “Kit” Carson defeated the Navajo and marched most of them into exile on the Bosque Redondo Reservation at Ft. Sumner, New Mexico. Several groups of Navajos hid in rugged areas beyond the traditional frontiers of the Navajo Country, however, remaining at large until the captivity of the bulk of the Navajo people was ended in 1868. One of these renegade bands was led by Hoskininni (Hashke Neiniih, “He Gave Them Out Angrily”, for biographical and onomastic information on individuals and places mentioned, see Appendix). This remarkable man took 16 Navajo and Paiute followers, plus a small herd of sheep and horses, westward from the exposed Kayenta, Arizona, area to the remote part of Arizona that lies just southward of Navajo Mountain, Utah, an area that had until that time been inhabited exclusively (but thinly) by Paiutes. Hoskininni’s band was later joined by 10 refugees from the Black Mesa, Arizona, area. The people spent six years in the vicinity and ranged from Paiute Canyon to the canyons near the confluence of the Colorado and San Juan rivers (Kelly 1941, 1953:219-226, d.u, n.d.; B. Cummings 1952:1-6; Correll 1971:149-151, 160; Baker 1974b; Luckert 1977:27-30). [1](#)

It was probably during this period that a man then known as Jayi Begay (jaa’f Biye”, “The Ear’s Son”) became the first Navajo to see the bridge. Jayi Begay was trailing strayed horses in Rainbow Bridge Canyon’s inner gorge, keeping his eyes on tracks he was following. It was not until he was under the stone span that he glanced up and noticed it. No doubt he was awestruck, and he appears to have been inspired to initiate incorporation of the bridge into Navajo religion, as representing the sacred rainbow and as being associated with the rain-producing capabilities of Navajo Mountain (Luckert 1977:9, 11, 146, 147).

Toward the end of his life, Jayi Begay was known as Blind Salt Clansman (“Ashiihf Binaa “Adinf). The bridge came to be called Tse’naa Na’nf’ ahigff (“Span Across”) or Tse Nanf’ahi (A Rock Spans”), and Navajo Singers (medicinemen) made pilgrimages to it (Luckert 1977:11, 29, 146, 147). Those Navajos not privy to the proper prayers refused to pass under the arch (Jett 1973:135-140).

WORD OF THE BRIDGE REACHES THE WETHERILLS

John and Mary Louisa Wade Wetherill established a trading post at Oljeto, Utah, in the spring of 1906 (Gillmor and Wetherill 1934: 71; Anonymous 1946:52; Comfort 1980: 39). As the only outpost of Anglo-American civilization in a vast area, the little stone-and-jacal house and store at Oljeto and their successors at Kayenta became stopping and outfitting places for scientific and exploratory expeditions to southeastern Utah and northeastern Arizona.

One archaeologist-explorer was Byron Cummings, Professor of Ancient Languages and Literature and Dean at the University of Utah. In 1907, he and his assistants undertook a survey of the three huge natural sandstone bridges in Utah’s White Canyon, west of Blanding, which were designated Natural Bridges National Monument on April 16, 1908 (Cummings 1910:30-32; Judd 1950:12-17, 1967a, 1968:4-14). Louisa later recalled that her husband had arranged for a Navajo to guide a party of whites (not the Cummings party) into White Canyon from the south (Anonymous 1923b). The Navajo, named Sharkie or One-Eyed Salt Clansman (Ashiihf Binaa’ ‘Eit’ ein), was one of the Wetherills’ customers. It seems clear that this individual was the same person as the Navajo discoverer of Rainbow Bridge. As Francis Gillmor wrote (following Mrs. Wetherill’s account), Sharkie asked Louisa:

“Why do they want to go? Why do they want to ride all that way over the clay hills to see--just rocks?”

Louisa responded, “That is why they go. Just rocks in those strange forms, making bridges. There is nothing like them anywhere else in the world.”

“They aren’t the only bridges in the world,” Sharkie objected. “We have a better one in this country.”

“Where is there a bridge in this country?” enquired Louisa.

“It is back of Navajo Mountain. It is called the Rock Rainbow that Spans the Canyon. Only a few go there. They do not know the prayers. They used to go for ceremonies, but the old men who knew the prayers are gone. I have horses in that country, and I have seen the bridge.” (Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:130; for a variant version, see Anonymous 1923b; Luckert 1977 attests that the prayers lived on.)

Neil M. Judd, nephew and protege of Byron Cummings, gave a variant report, that Sharkie had not gone to White Canyon but had heard of the professor's 1907 work there early in 1908; and that shortly before his death (sometime prior to August), Sharkie enquired as to what whites such as Cummings were doing "in the Navajo Country." Louisa explained, using the 1907 White Canyon survey as an illustration, and Sharkie said he had heard of another big bridge but had never seen it (Judd 1927:8, 1959:9, 1968:4, 32). (According to Cummings, Sharkie was alive until the autumn of 1908.)

There is yet another version of how the Wetherills came to hear of the bridge from Sharkie, in the spring of 1907. Robert Frothingham (1932:36-37), who was guided in the region by John Wetherill in the 1920s and who corresponded with him, gave an ample but highly dramatized and not always accurate account. Frothingham characterized Sharkie as a relatively young man, the survival of whose wife and newborn was supposedly due to Mrs. Wetherill's ministrations, and who was not old enough to have the ceremonial knowledge to make the pilgrimage to the bridge. If this is true, Sharkie, the One-Eyed Salt Clansman, was not the Blind Salt Clansman who discovered the Bridge. Other accounts describe Sharkie as old, however, and he did die soon after revealing the existence of the bridge to the Wetherills (Cummings 1952:39; Judd 1959:8; Comfort 1980:62). Frothingham went on to say that Sharkie had heard of, but not seen, Rainbow Bridge. Frothingham (1932:37) wrote that one day Sharkie "took John for a long walk in the desert, where he unfolded to him (not Louisa) a deep secret": the existence of the stone rainbow. Sharkie revealed this to Wetherill out of gratitude, knowing of John's love of exploration. But Wetherill (1-28-24) acknowledged that it was Louisa, not himself, who had been told of the bridge, and others stated the same (Roosevelt 1913:314; Grey 1922:3; Kluckhohn 1933:115).

Louisa, on the other hand, is reported to have told of learning of the bridge from a man who was taking her to visit a sick Navajo (Mackendrick 1923:62; Anonymous 1923a:K5). It is not possible entirely to reconcile these versions. My guess is that Sharkie was indeed the Navajo discoverer, that he heard of Anglos' interest in the White Canyon bridges during the summer of 1907, that he then mentioned Rainbow Bridge to Mrs. Wetherill (who had extraordinary rapport with Navajos) while she was riding with Sharkie to visit a sick relative of his, and that she passed on the information to her husband. In any case, Sharkie's tale generated some excitement at Oljeto.

All of the Wetherill brothers--Richard, Al (Benjamin Alfred), John, Clayton, and Win (Winslow)--were inveterate explorers, best known for their pioneering investigations of the ancient ruins of Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde, and Tsegi Canyon (Gillmor and Wetherill 1934; McNitt 1966; Fletcher 1977; Harrell 1987). According to Frothingham (1932:37-38) Wetherill pressured Sharkie, begging to be taken to the bridge, but months passed without result and John had simply to bide his time. Plans finally were made to go during the fall of 1908, but according to Frothingham, Sharkie died during the summer of 1907 (probably during the winter of 1907-1908). Before dying, he secured from the Paiute Nasja Bejay (Na'ashjaa' Bieye', "Owl's Son"), who "knew the trail," a promise to guide Wetherill.

Continued Frothingham (1932:38-39), "Wetherill, who knew Nasja Begay personally and feared another setback, urged a prompt start." As a Paiute, Nasja Begay was unworried about the taboo but was afraid of offending pious local Navajos. Nasja Begay's caution may have related to friction at that time between the Navajo and the Paiute: "some of the Navajos...felt the Wetherills were favoring the Pahutes too much and consequently were somewhat jealous" (B. Cummings n.d.:104; 1952:20). Accordingly, that summer he and Wetherill pretended to leave for Flagstaff, Arizona, but at Tsegi Canyon, where they had secreted a pack horse, they left their wagons and headed northwestward. West of Nasja Begay's home in Paiute Canyon they spent a week unsuccessfully searching for the trail, which the Paiute apparently did not know as well as had been represented; in fact, he had probably not yet actually visited the bridge. When the packhorse slid over a precipice and scattered their dwindling supplies, the searchers returned home. Wetherill (1-28-24) said that in 1907 or 1908 a Navajo Indian had told his wife of the existence of the bridge but died "before any of us could get around to make the trip...However, about a year before (3) the trip was finally made, we found a Navajo (sic; Paiute) who said that he could take us in and we made the attempt, but found that he did not know the trail. Our attempts were abandoned until the fall (August) of 1909."

Louisa did not mention this failed expedition in her autobiography, although she did indicate that Wetherill's partner, Clyde A. Colville, had also been bitten by the exploration bug. Early in the spring of 1908, he had set off in search of the bridge. With him was a Navajo Singer called Hosteen Luka, also known as Huddle Chusley. They reached Beaver Creek in Cha

Canyon, north of Navajo Mountain, but Luka said he could not find the trail in the sandstone billows beyond that point. The pair also climbed Navajo Mountain but apparently failed to espy the Bridge in the maze of red rocks below (Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:131).

CUMMINGS AND DOUGLASS PICK UP THE SCENT

In August 1908, two more white men entered the “Rainbow Bridge sweepstakes.” One was Cummings, who used Oljeto as headquarters during his examination of the Anasazi cliff dwellings of the Tsegi and other nearby canyons that summer. According to his account, in late August Louisa Wetherill (John, according to Louisa) told him Sharkie’s tale of the bridge, and Cummings made arrangements for John and Sharkie to guide him there the following June (Judd 1909, 1968:26, 30-33; J. Wetherill 1-28-24: Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:161; B. Cummings 1952:20-15; Tanner 1954:6). As Judd later put it, “Search for the great stone arch ‘shaped like a rainbow’ was definitely on the Cummings program for 1909” (Judd 1950:21-22, 1968:40). [2](#) In this version of events, Sharkie was still alive but died in late autumn, 1908; but this seems to reflect confusion on Cummings’ part.

According to most published accounts, during the winter of 1908-1909 Louisa made many inquiries of her customers concerning Rainbow Bridge. Then, in early spring 1909, Nasja Begay and his father, Nasja, came in to the post. They now informed Louisa that they had seen the Bridge (apparently in June 1908) while hunting for strayed (or wild) horses. Nasja Begay supposedly had neglected to mention this to Wetherill the previous October or thereabouts--apparently once again out of fear of Navajo resentment--when Wetherill had approached the Paiute about a proposed second attempt to locate the bridge. This time the two Paiutes agreed to act as guides for Wetherill and Cummings in the summer (Judd 1927:8-9, 1959:9; Frothingham 1932:38-39; Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:161; B. Cummings 1952:39-40; Comfort 1980:62).

When Nasja Begay turned John Wetherill down in about the fall of 1908, the native apparently recommended another Paiute (or Ute), Mike’s Boy, also known as Jim, Jim Mike, Sin’al, Ghavoy (“Cowboy”), and Costen or Case Etten Begay. Mike’s Boy, who was supposed to have visited Rainbow Bridge, was at that time working as an axeman for William Boone Douglass, U.S. Examiner of Surveys, under contract with the General Land Office (GLO). The government man was completing a survey of newly created Natural Bridges National Monument (W. Douglass 1955:8), thus in part duplicating work Cummings’ party had done the previous year, a fact Douglass failed to mention in his report (W. Douglass 1908) but which must have been known, because it was on the basis of Cummings’ autumn 1907 report that the Land Office had recommended creation of the national monument. Cummings and Judd resented the omission of any reference to their earlier work (Judd, 1967a:17, 1967b:31, 1968:41). According to Frothingham (1932:39), Nasja Begay visited Mike’s Boy at Douglass’ camp, returning to Wetherill with Mike’s Boy’s promise to guide Wetherill in December.

By the beginning of October, however, Douglass had already learned of the bridge, and probably of Wetherill’s plans, from his axeman (perhaps due to Nasja Begay’s visit), and so reported to his superiors on October 7, 1908:

[The Paiute Mike’s Boy] informs me that a larger and prettier natural bridge than those included in the (White Canyon) survey is to be found on the San Juan River about 80 or 100 miles West of Bluff. That the bridge is a white sandstone arch “like a rainbow,” more delicate and with a longer span than the “Augusta” (Sipapu) bridge...Mike’s Boy says no white man has ever seen this bridge and that only he and another Indian knows its whereabouts...(Fearing that oil prospectors might find it and claim the area,) I have secured a promise that nothing be said of it until I have time to learn the wishes of yourself on the subject (W. Douglass 10-7-08).

Douglass (1-19-10) later said that Mike’s Boy had bent a stick and put the two ends into the ground to demonstrate the Bridge’s rainbow shape. On October 20, Douglass was sent instructions to do as he had suggested in his report: to investigate both the Tsegi ruins and the reported bridge “80 or 90 miles west of Bluff” for possible segregation as national monuments (Demerett 10-20-08). Douglass left Lake City, Colorado, on November 27, taking two chainmen to Bluff City, Utah. He apparently persuaded Mike’s Boy to guide him instead of Wetherill (W. Douglass 11-26-08, 11-28-08). Wrote Frothingham (1932:39; also Judd 1968:41), “John realized his secret was out...(But) Jim failed to put in an appearance at Oljeto the following December at the place where Douglass was waiting for him. The trip was abandoned and Douglass returned to

White Canyon considerably chopfallen to find flagman Jim blandly waiting for him but minus any explanation as to why he had failed to show up at Oljeto.”

Douglass reported, “On reaching Oljato, Utah, (on December 4,) having missed my guide, Mr. John Wetherill expressed the opinion that Jim was lying. He was sure there was no bridge where Jim said, but stated than an old Navajo Indian had informed him of a bridge on Navajo Creek. I, however, fully believed in Jim, but the snow was such that the trip was abandoned until next year, when Jim led the party to the bridge, which we found to be as he (had) discribed (sic) it” (W. Douglass 1-19-10, also 3-7-18).

According to Frothingham’s (1932:39-40) account, Wetherill concluded that Jim simply was ignorant of the route and wanted to avoid being put to the test. It is possible, however, that, resenting Douglass’ attempt to preempt Mike’s Boy as guide, Wetherill had dissuaded the latter from guiding Douglass and had mentioned a “bridge” in Navajo Canyon as a red herring. It does appear that by this time Nasja Begay knew the route, and the Wetherills may well have wanted to keep Douglass away so that their client Cummings could be the “official discoverer” the next summer (Dorothy Leake, interview, 5-12-83).

Douglass (1955:8) reported that he had counted on Wetherill as a guide but that the latter had run out of provisions and had needed to leave immediately to obtain supplies. Douglass had then hired Navajo medicineman Sam Chief as interpreter and guide. They were on the trail between December 5 and 8 but heavy snow prevented them from reaching the ruins or the bridge. [3](#) Wetherill and Colville did provide the surveyor with information which allowed Douglass to prepare a map of the region. It showed the supposed bridge in a tributary of Navajo Canyon that headed near Navajo Mountain, and the general locations of the ruins, on the basis of which Navajo National Monument was proclaimed on March 20, 1909.

Over the years, Neil M. Judd, Cummings’ nephew and a participant in the latter’s explorations, promulgated different explanations as to how Douglass learned of the bridge. In 1909, he wrote that while surveying the White Canyon spans, Douglass employed Mormon George [sic; Dan] Perkins and Jim (Mike’s Boy). Jim told Perkins or another Anglo employee about the arch, and the employee passed this on to Douglass. But in 1919, Judd (1959:8-13) reported to the National Park Service that Douglass had “heard of it [the bridge] from the Wetherills in 1908 after Professor Cummings had returned to Salt Lake City.” In later years, Judd (1950:22-23, 1967b:32, 1968:33,41) elaborated his position, stating that Douglass had learned of Rainbow Bridge from Mike’s Boy, who had probably picked up gossip about it in Bluff City, Utah, after Wetherill and Cummings had passed through there in early September 1908. This last revision apparently was required by an examination of Douglass’ (10-19, 1-19-10, 3-7-18) reports on Rainbow Bridge.

1909: THE TEAMS GATHER

Although Judd (1968:34, 40) wrote that Louisa Wetherill had made enquiries about the bridge at Cummings’ request, he also stated that, “Returning to Oljeto in late June 1909, Professor Cummings found the Wetherills more intent upon discovering the ‘Rainbow-like’ natural bridge...than upon furthering his archaeological explorations.” But, continued Judd (apparently downplaying the dean’s eagerness), having had his work delayed the previous summer, Cummings preferred to do some digging first. A rendezvous date in late July was set for the Rainbow Bridge endeavor (M. Cummings 1959:15). Geologist Herbert E. Gregory (1916:45) was informed of the bridge about August 1 and apparently was invited by Wetherill to participate in the search but was unable to do so.

Cummings (1952:40) recounted circumstances a bit differently. “Since Mr. Wetherill could not get away at that time (when the Utah party arrived), we went to work on ruins...until such time as Mr. Wetherill could make the trip. “Cummings’ son Malcom, then 11 years old and a member of the party, later recollected that Wetherill and Cummings had agreed to meet at Oljeto about the second week in July. Returning there from Tsegi Hatsosi (Narrow Canyon), Cummings found that it was not convenient for Wetherill to leave just then, so a new rendezvous for the beginning of August was arranged, to take place at ruin-dotted Tsegi Canyon (M. Cummings 1940:22, 1959:15).

In a 1934 statement, Wetherill (1955:24) recalled that he had needed to make trips to Gallup, New Mexico, and Bluff City. At the latter, “I met W. B. Douglass, who was planning a trip to try to find the Rainbow Bridge. I convinced him that he should

try to see Dean Cummings. He had been trying to get the Dean's (archaeological) permits cancelled. I was able to get him to promise to meet the Dean at Oljeto." To this account, Frances Gillmor and Louisa Wetherill (1934:165-166) added that an attempt to prevent issuance of an excavation permit had occurred earlier in the summer and that Douglass now wanted to get the permit revoked and therefore ordered Wetherill to confiscate the Utah Archaeological Expedition's specimens. John was unable to dissuade him, but he did achieve an agreement to combine the parties in the search for the bridge (Frothingham 1932:40; Comfort 1980:63). Douglass' stated purpose in opposing the permits was to keep intact and in government hands all artifacts from the new Navajo National Monument. [4](#)

The Cummings group was working in the main Tsegi Canyon, 30 miles south of Oljeto. Wetherill hurried from Bluff City to the archaeologists' camp opposite the mouth of Betatakin Canyon, bearing his news of Douglass as well as letters for archaeologists. One letter to Cummings was from Bishop Jumen I. Jones of Bluff City, confirming that Douglass had been telephoning and wiring Washington about the permits and that he intended to make a search for the bridge (M. Cummings 1940:22; Judd 1950:24, 1968:40; B. Cummings 1952:40; S. Young 1959:14; Goldwater 1970:72).

As noted previously, Wetherill claimed to have persuaded Douglass to meet with Cummings at Oljeto in about four day's time. Gillmor and Wetherill (1934:166) went on to say,

he [Wetherill] and Cummings, perturbed, tried to decide what their course of action should be. John Wetherill still felt that the difficulty might be solved. If the two men could meet face to face and talk it out, could know each other as he knew them both, surely their disagreement (over excavation) could be settled. Both men were now hunting the undiscovered bridge of stone...Consolidating the two parties might be the solution. If Douglass is a reasonable man--and he must be to hold the position he does--we can straighten this out in a few minutes," Wetherill declared..."Then, since we are both hunting the bridge, we can hunt it together." (See also B. Cummings 3-6-24)

But Wetherill's real intent is brought into question by accounts of the Cummings party.

The original plan had apparently been to leave Tsegi Canyon via its upper reaches and to travel westward, meeting with Nasja Begay at his home in Piute Canyon (B. Cummings 1952:40; Comfort 1980:63). Stuart M. Young (1959), a student member of the Cummings group, recalled that when Wetherill arrived at the Tsegi camp he declared, "We can cut across the (Tall Mountain) mesa (from the Tsegi), have supplies sent out from Oljeto, Mrs. Wetherill can contact (Nasja Begay)...and have him meet us and take us to it (the Bridge)." "We could easily get their first" (Young, 11-15-55). But Dean Cummings' response was, "It would be much better if we returned to Oljeto and the two parties joined in being the first there" (Young 1959). Other Utah-party sources also indicate that it was Cummings' rather than Wetherill's idea for the groups to join forces. Cummings (1952:40) said "it seemed strange" that Douglass wished to stop their digging, and "a strange coincidence" that the government man was also about to look for the Bridge. So, "To satisfy our curiosity and meet this surveyor, we packed up and went forty miles back to Oljeto."

Now only one who knew Professor Cummings (who was the most generous of men) could understand how truly characteristic it was for him to order his party back. Bear in mind (Cummings' advantageous position and uncalled-for generosity in face of Douglass' behavior)...and you will better understand the impatience of other members of the Utah group and our subsequent disappointment when Douglass announced that Professor Cummings had attached himself to the federal party! (Judd 1927:5, 1967b:32)

"Turning back from the Segi to wait for the government man annoyed John Wetherill, but he said nothing; after all, he was paid by the day" (Judd 1968:40; that who was paying was important also was attested to by Wetherill 1955:24). Was Wetherill's annoyance merely Judd's imagination? Was Young's memory faulty concerning Wetherill's urging Cummings to leave immediately for Rainbow? Did Wetherill consciously or unconsciously distort the facts when he later claimed to have arranged the Cummings-Douglass meeting? Did he invite Douglass to a get-together in bad faith, with the intention of actually high-tailing it to the bridge and leaving Douglass to cool his heels at Oljeto? Or did he simply suggest immediate departure as one alternative for Cummings' consideration? The answer probably will never be known, but Frothingham's (1932:40; also

Comfort 1980:63) description of John's eagerness and the implied competitive attitude on the trader's part suggest that Quaker Wetherill's peacemaking role has been overstressed by some authors. As Hegemann (1963:227) wrote, "John was such a soft-spoken, unassuming man, that at first one did not realize the steel that lay under the surface."

To me, the evidence seems to suggest that Wetherill's personal wish was to leave immediately and to beat Douglass to the bridge. This probably was due to resentment of Douglass' attitude and to John's loyalty to his employer and friend, Cummings, as well as to a competitive spirit. As for Cummings, even Judd (1968:3, 34) acknowledged that, in addition to his integrity and generosity, the short-statured Dean--known as Naat'aanii Yazhi, "Little Boss," to the Navajo--"had a mind of his own and was not easily bent to another's point of view....(He was not) to be pushed around." "Repeatedly challenged and often threatened, he called more than one Indian's bluff" (Judd 1952:xi, 1968:34-35; also Tanner 1954:3; Covey 1975:115). Since as far as the professor was concerned, Douglass' actions were unwarranted, ungentlemanly, and perhaps malicious, Dean Cummings' stubbornness rather than his generosity seems more likely to have been elicited by the situation. ⁵ Why, then, did he decide to meet with Douglass rather than to leave for Rainbow Bridge? Perhaps he desired a confrontation with his tormentor. But the more obvious motive is that whatever Wetherill's role, and however generous or resentful Cummings may have felt, from a pragmatic diplomatic point of view--to save the fruits of his summers' excavations--meeting with Douglass and offering cooperation in the Rainbow Bridge hunt might prove the best way to defuse a threatening situation. This thesis is strengthened by Cummings' (3-6-24) remark to the Acting Director of the National Park Service: "After supposedly clearing his (Douglass') misunderstanding of our rights in the country, we proposed that we join forces in the undertaking to find this bridge." Douglass (9-13-09, 11-24-09), for his part, apparently thought Cummings had agreed to cease digging in Navajo National Monument. In any case, the permits were not cancelled.

Since Cummings "insisted" on returning to Oljeto, the party did so (Judd 1968:40), although only after taking the time to follow a Navajo guide up a side canyon to see the previously "undiscovered" cliff dwelling of Betatakin--spending only an hour there (Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:166-169). Wetherill (1955:24) gave the date as August 9. (For a slightly different version, see Judd 1927:5, 1950:24.)

At Oljeto, there was no sign of Douglass. According to Judd (1927:9), Wetherill had said that the surveyor was expected at the trading post "in about four days." so his absence should not have been surprising. The fact that Cummings was now "ready and anxious to begin the journey" (Judd 1959:10) suggests the possibility that the competitive fever was gaining ascendancy over diplomatic considerations (see also Rogers, interview, 5-9-90). It was later said that he felt pressed because his students had to return to university classes, although Cummings himself had a sabbatical leave during the fall of 1909 (Judd 1909, 1968:44; Anonymous 1909e). Judd (1967b:32) and Young (Jones 1979a:4) stated that at Oljeto, Cummings waited two days (actually, about 24 hours) for word of Douglass, and then "because neither he nor Wetherill could delay longer," they started out. "About mid-afternoon a messenger brought word from Clyde Colville...that Douglass had arrived and would follow. So the professor and his companions unsaddled to await the surveyors" (Judd 1967b:32). Or, as Gillmor and Wetherill (1934:169) described the situation,

At Oljato there was no word from Douglass....

[Yet, to resolve the two parties' differences.] "We'll wait a day for Douglass," John Wetherill decided....

They sent word on ahead for Nasja-begay to meet them at Paiute Canyon.....

At the end of the twenty-four hours, Douglass had not reached Oljato. Cummings' time was limited; his university classes would soon begin; the expedition had to go on....

Hardly had they started when a Navajo brought word that a white man was approaching. They made camp and waited for him to overtake them.⁶

Cummings (1952:41) recollected that the message had arrived about four o'clock, after some dozen mile's travel, and that the two groups first met at dusk: Rogers (interview, 5-9-90) also stated, based on conversations with Wetherill, that the parties met near Organ Rock. Oddly, in light of the above, an account written by Judd less than two months after the event differs even from his own later accounts (and is partly confirmed in reports by Young (1909a: 1911)). Judd (1909) stated that on August 10, after final preparations, the party was eating a hasty lunch before departing Oljeto, an Indian appeared at the window and said "Pelicano (Bilagaano=Americano) come." Douglass' party appeared shortly before noon and was served a

meal at the Wetherills' table. Douglass "accepted" Cummings' "suggestions" that they join forces, and the combined expedition left about 4:00 or 5:00 P.M. that afternoon, after giving Douglass' party and animals a chance to rest. [7](#)This is consistent with Douglass' (1955:9) contention that when he reached Oljeto, the Utah group "was preparing to start."

The surveyors' group consisted of John R. English (of Seattle, Washington), head chainman; Francis Jean Rogerson (of Monticello, Utah), second chainman; Daniel Perkins (of Bluff City), flagman and packer (and Cummings' 1907 guide to White Canyon); John ("Jack") Keenan (of Bluff City), flagman and cook; and Mike's Boy (of Verdure, Utah), guide (W. Douglass 1955:9; Judd 1967b:32). The Cummings entourage included, besides Wetherill, Navajo wrangler and cook Dogeye Begay (Daghaa'f Biye', "The Mustache's (Whiskers') Son"), of Piute Canyon; former student Donald Beauregard (of Fillmore, Utah), artist; students Stuart M. Young (of Salt Lake City), photographer and packer, and Neil M. Judd (of Salt Lake City), foreman and packer; plus Cummings' 11-year-old son Malcolm (B. Cummings 1952:40; Judd 1959:10). [8](#)

During the remainder of the afternoon, the Utah men had to wait several times for Douglass' heavily loaded pack horses to catch up. At sundown, all the animals were unloaded and hobbled, and camp was made, apparently in a valley tributary to that of Moonlight Creek, along a miner's wagon road. [9](#)

According to Cummings (1952:41), "Mr. Douglass was very noncommittal about what he had been doing or trying to do. He was very condescending toward our party, said he was going to find the big arch he had heard about, that his Paiute guide, Mike's Boy, knew the country, had been to the bridge, and that we might go along if we wanted to. A wonderful privilege under the circumstances."

ON THE TORTUOUS TRAIL

The next morning, Wetherill rounded up the horses and turned out the travelers by 4:00 A.M. After a pre-dawn breakfast, a 6:00 A.M. departure was made. The route passed about two and a half miles southwestward of the lone butte of Organ Rock, and the riders took note of another butte (the Stone Hogan) and a rock needle (Jacobs Monument) a comparable distance to the southwest and west. The route led into Copper Canyon, and down it to the bench above the San Juan River near the mouth of Nokai Canyon. Douglass was hard of hearing, making use of an ear trumpet on a 30-inch flexible tube (the Navajos dubbed him, "Man Who Hears Through A Rope"). Malcolm Cummings (1940:22; also Judd 1968:32) later recalled, "He asked someone to ride beside him. Members of his own party appeared reluctant to do this and my father and John Wetherill volunteered." So they traveled, continuing along the wagon road around the north base of No Mans Mesa and up Nokai Canyon a short distance to their second camp. During that afternoon, Wetherill had quizzed Mike's Boy (Judd 1909, 1927:9, 1967b:32). Judd (1959:10) reported in 1919, "Mr Douglass has persistently contended that the Utah men attached themselves to his party and that his Indian, Jim's boy [sic], was the real guide of the expedition. As a matter of fact, the Ute confessed... that he had never been within a day's ride of Navajo Mountain, but that he hoped to find the bridge through directions from other Indians (specifically, Nasja)."

What Douglass (1955:9) actually contended in his early reports was that "He (Cummings) was preparing to start (from Oljeto) in search of the bridge, having learned of my proposed trip from Mr. Wetherell (sic), whom he had employed as a guide. From this point we proceeded as one party all under the guidance of Jim. Later, we jointly employed an additional guide, a Paiute named Nasja Bega, supposed to have a better acquaintance with the local trails." Who was guiding whom seems to have been a matter of individual perception.

A pack horse threw a shoe during the day. To minimize weight, the packers had omitted to bring along a shoeing outfit. So, that evening Wetherill improvised "with nails from an old tomato carton, salvaged from the camp site of a defunct placer company, with a cobblestone as a shoeing hammer" (Judd 1927:9-10). The crate may have been debris from the Hector and Otto Zahn mining operations, or perhaps had belonged to miner Charles H. Spencer (Crampton 1964:142).

August 12 was a long and difficult day. The riders had to exit Nokai Canyon by way of a seemingly endless switchback trail up the talus and ledges of the western wall of the lower end of the gorge (Jones 1983). In places, the trail was too narrow for the large animals Douglass had hired, and from time to time their packs had to be removed and the animals helped around

treacherous projections by being guided at neck and tail. After reaching the rim, the party angled southwestward across broad Piute Mesa. After a little over a mile, they came upon “shallow rainwater pools, paved with sheep droppings and swarming with little black wigglers, (which) invited a brief halt while horses and men slaked their thirst” (Judd 1927:10, 1967b:33).

After a six-mile ride across the mesa, the travelers descended another sunbaked, rocky trail to Nasja’s cornfields and homestead in Piute Canyon. The old man, who was sunning himself beside his hogan, reported that since the explorers had not showed up when expected, his son had taken the sheep and goats to pasture on the mountain. This had occurred a day or two previously, and Nasja Begay was supposedly some 25 miles away (certainly a gross exaggeration). The father then purportedly gave Wetherill directions as to how to proceed, and promised to send his son a message directing him to a rendezvous further along the trail; a boy was dispatched to deliver the message and to take over the herd (Judd 1927:10, 1967b:33; B. Cummings 1952:41).

Malcolm Cummings (1940:23, 1959:15) said that “We were ready but Douglass did not like the plan. His guide was completely lost. He wanted to wait for Nasja-begay and have him start out from there with us. After some palavering we started, both parties together.” As Douglass’ guide, Mike’s Boy certainly would have endeavored to get directions from Nasja in their common language. If Mike’s Boy hesitated to proceed on the basis of Nasja’s presumably inadequate instructions, one must wonder why Wetherill continued onward with apparent confidence.

The group lunched on fry bread and watermelon at Nasja’s camp, and then resumed the march. Beyond the hogan of the Paiute Lehi Begay, another steep trail up a short side canyon led the riders westward out of the main canyon and onto the extensive Rainbow Plateau. They traversed some miles of easy country northeast of Navajo Mountain around the head of Deep (or Spring) Canyon, and then descended into broad Shadow Valley near the head of Desha Creek. The route next led down through rock draws to the clear, tree lined waters of Beaver Creek in a shallow stretch of Cha canyon, where the travelers found a small summer farm. As early as lunchtime that day, some expedition members apparently felt that the group was lost, although Wetherill had almost certainly gotten this far in 1907; but Cha Canyon was to be the searchers’ last camp before entering the Rainbow Plateau’s rugged, little-known Baldrock Crescent country (W. Douglass 1909b; M. Cummings 1940:23; 1959:15; B. Cummings 1952:41-42; Judd 1959:10).

According to Judd (1967b:33, citing Wetherill 2-25-24), with some foreknowledge of the route ahead from Nasja’s description and in light of the animals’ previous difficulties, Perkins minimized his horses’ loads and left all nonessentials, including half of each bedroll, at Beaver Creek, and on August 13, the expedition took a long loop northward, down and across the divide between Cha and Baldrock canyons, returning southward along a bench above the floor of Baldrock Canyon. As they were crossing the western half of the interfluvium, the explorers experienced what seemed to most of them the extreme difficulty of finding the route through the rolling Navajo Sandstone “bald-heads.” [10](#) As the route’s difficulties became apparent, “Mike’s Boy, in whom his employer placed unbounded confidence, said white men’s horses could never traverse such country and wanted to turn back” (J. Wetherill 2-25-24, in Judd 1967:33). Wrote Wetherill (1-28-24), “Jim (Mike’s Boy) bowed up saying that the Whiteman’s horses could not get over the rocks. It was very evident that Jim did not know the trail and took this method to hide his ignorance or his distaste for the difficult journey. “Both Mike’s Boy and Dogeye Begay “were frequently at fault” while trying to find the route, according to Young (1911:17, 1959).

Judd (1927:11) wrote,

I still marvel at Wetherill’s ability or instinct to lead us over these windswept surfaces, around dangerously narrow ledges, past apparently unsurpassable barriers, without visible evidence of earlier travel to guide him. But he did, and brought us finally to the rounded crest of the “smooth rocks”....

Here, at last, a trail! The first sign observed since passing Paiute Canyon that other humans had journeyed this way. Shallow steps, pecked with stone hammers, led down the curved nose of the precipice into the valley below.

Down “Hoskininni’s Stairway” the horses were urged, two getting off the trail and sliding to the bottom. From there, the group made its way into a narrow rock-walled corridor that led to Surprise Valley along upper Nasja (Owl) Creek. [11](#)

Judd (1909, 1927:12, 1959:11; Young 1911:17) reported that earlier in the day, while picking their way through the bald rocks, two of Douglass' Anglo assistants had "openly expressed their discontent" at the hardships, including half rations, and that Mike's Boy and Dogeye Begay "both threatened to quit and return to more agreeable valleys. But Wetherill laughed them to shame and forced their continued, though unwilling, cooperation under threat of telling all the Indians who visited his post that these two had failed under hardship and displayed less stamina than white men."

In later years, Cummings (3-6-24) contended that,

When we reached a point beyond the regular trails, he (Mike's Boy) seemed confused and wanted to turn back, saying that it was impossible to get our horses and packs around the north side of the Mountain.... When we reached the rougher country beyond the trails, both Jim Mike and Mr. Douglas(s) repeatedly urged the advisability of giving up and turning back, saying that it would be impossible to get through and find the arch. Finally to satisfy them we went into camp about four o'clock in the afternoon saying that we would wait until the morning for Noscha Begay, but that if he did not arrive that night, we were going on.

Surprise Valley was an open, juniper-and pinyon-fringed, cliff-girt glen, carpeted with scrub oaks and yellowed grass. The horses were released to graze for the rest of the afternoon, and the discouraged and discontented travelers set up camp under a pinyon. Water was available in nearby Nasja Creek, and later a supper of rice, canned corn, biscuits, and tea was prepared and laid out on a piece of canvas (Judd 1927:12-13, 1967b:34). [12](#)

Every horse was footsore, according to Malcolm Cummings (1940:24), "but those ridden by members of the Douglas party were in a more serious condition. They were all larger animals and being used to oats and hay, rough trails and scanty forage were telling on them. Douglass suggested we abandon the trip but Dr. Cummings said our party was going on." Cummings (1952:42) wrote that "Mr. Douglas(s) was sure Noscha Begay would never overtake us, that we would get lost in that terrible country where there were no trails. Mike's Boy plainly did not know the country and was becoming frightened." Added Judd (1967b:34), "our Indians...were in a dither. Both wanted to turn back; they had gone far enough. We were lost! There was no escape from these infernal gorges....A little further and there would be no return."

But about 10:00 P.M., as supper was ending, Nasja Begay rode dramatically out of the dark into camp, smiling a greeting. Spirits quickly revived. "The campfire was rekindled, (Nasja Begay was fed,) and Wetherill, translating for Prof. Cummings, questioned the Piate (sic) closely as to our present position. There was no mistake....Another half day, he said, and we should reach Rainbow Bridge" (Judd 1967b:34).

THE FINAL DASH

After an early breakfast on the 14th, the group climbed the steep talus of Hellgate, a rock-walled ravine up out of Surprise Valley, seeing and photographing Owl Arch on the way. (They seem also later to have seen White Crag Arch, higher on Navajo Mountain's slope to the south (B. Cummings 1910:165; Fewkes 1911: map opp. p. 34)). The trail continued on a broad shelf of sandstone, around the head of a canyon. Cummings and Wetherill seem to have been in the lead; whenever they found themselves at an impasse, they would call upon Nasja Begay, who otherwise rode with Mike's Boy and Dogeye Begay. After descending a steep, cobbly talus, the party traversed narrow, green-girt, spring-fed Paradise Valley (upper Oak Canyon), whose silvery stream flows through "the most delightfully secluded and picturesque retreat on the Rainbow Trail" (Judd 1927:13).

A steep, stony ascent and more rocky country followed. Wrote Cummmings (1952:42; also 3-6-24), "Mr. Douglas(s) still fussed about getting lost among the rocks and his guide became still more scared." The men and horses negotiated a fairly narrow defile they later referred to as "Redbud Pass," into a dry tributary that led them down into what they dubbed "Hidden Valley," where they paused for lunch (B. Cummings 3-6-24, 1952:42; M. Cummings 1940:24; Judd 1967b:34). This stream-carrying gorge was upper (Rainbow) Bridge Canyon. [13](#)

Tensions began to mount as the trail was resumed. Reported Cummings (1952:42), “Mr. Douglas(s) turned to me and said, ‘I should think you would go back and look after that boy of yours. I have a boy a little older than yours, but I think too much of him to bring him into a country like this. If you thought of your boy, you’d stay with him and look after him.’ I replied simply, ‘You need not worry about him. He is on a sure-footed pony and the (university) boys will take just as good care of him as I could.’” By this time, said young Malcolm Cummings (1940:24),

[I] didn’t care whether I ever saw it [the Bridge] or not. My pony and I were both tired. We were too fagged to hurry even if the others did seem to go faster all the time. I believe I was last in the procession all the way down Nonnezoshie Boko [Bridge Canyon]. I remember watching the round smooth boulders over my pony’s withers as she picked her way over them. If a hoof caught, a fall would mean a broken leg. My father sent Dogeye-begay back once or twice to see how I was getting along. Later I learned why the speed had been increased. Douglas[s] wanted to be at the head of the line so he could see the bridge first and be the discoverer. He thought my father should go back and look after me. I was much too young to make such a trip as this. However, my father, John Wetherill and Nasja-begay kept in the lead.

Douglass’ (1955: 14) report included the observation that as the riders came nearer and nearer to Rainbow, “the excitement became intense. A spirit of rivalry developed between Professor Cummings and myself as to who should first reach the bridge. The first 3 places of the single file line were of necessity conceded to the 3 guides. For 3 hours we rode an uncertain race, taking risks of horsemanship neither would ordinarily think of doing, the lead varying as one or the other secured advantage.”

Judd (1967b:36) later wrote, “Had the professor known of this rivalry at the time, he would have been the most astonished member of the joint expedition.” It is doubtful, however, that Cummings could have been oblivious to Douglass’ maneuverings if the following 1919 account by Judd (1959:11-12) is accurate:

Throughout the last day’s travel, Mr. Douglas(s) exhibited the uncontrolled enthusiasm of the amateur explorer and he was so utterly disregarding of possible danger to other members of the party as to arouse the disgust of all. He seemed to lead the party and crowded the other riders from the narrow trail as he repeatedly forced his tired horse to the front. Mr. Douglas(s) was the only member of the expedition engaged in this wild race; time and again necessity compelled him to turn back from ledges he had unwisely followed but he always charged blindly forward again. The jagged rocks had torn the shoes from the horses’ feet and cut their hooves to the quick(some bled). They were extremely weary and the men also showed signs of fatigue as the party made its way over the hot sand and rocky ledges down into [Rainbow Bridge Canyon].

Judd (1909) also reported “that the owner of the horse he (Douglass) was riding had complained to another member of his party that ‘the old man would kill the little mare if he had to ride her much farther at that gait.’”

The party was now proceeding on a bench between the coppery Navajo Sandstone main cliffs and the darker Kayenta strata of an inner gorge. After descending the deepening canyon for a mile and a half or so, according to Cummings (1952:42), about 11:00 A.M. “Noscha Begay suggested (through Wetherill) that I ride ahead with him, saying that when we rounded a certain bend ahead, we could see the big arch....” [14](#) Just who was in the lead at this point is unclear. Wetherill (letter cited in Frothingham 1932:43; also Rogers, interview, 5-9-90) said Nasja Begay was first, followed closely by Cummings, Douglass, and himself. Cummings implied the same in saying that Nasja Begay invited the professor to ride ahead with him. However, Douglass (1955:14) indicated that the three “guides”—apparently meaning Nasja Begay, Mike’s Boy, and Wetherill—were in the lead, and in later years Dan Perkins recalled that the two Paiutes were out ahead, followed by Wetherill and himself and then by Douglass and Cummings (Crampton 1961). Mike’s Boy said that Nasja Begay was ahead (Haymond and others 1985). Judd (1959:12) wrote that Douglass was “some distance in the lead,” in advance of the pack animals, when Judd saw Cummings suddenly draw rein, calling to those near him and pointing down canyon to where, half hidden among the purple shadows far to the left, the stone bridge could be seen. Wetherill reached Cummings’ side, as did Young a few minutes later; Judd’s (1927:13) “rope plied the brown pack horse (he was in charge of) more vigorously than was necessary,” and he and others gathered by Cummings. The deaf Douglass “had continued several hundred yards alone on his big, sweating roan before he noticed that some of the others were already (silently) admiring the graceful curve of the bridge.” He reached the

viewpoint at about the same moment Judd did (Judd 1959:12).

Douglass apparently had missed this view of the bridge and had passed ahead into the Echo Spring rincon, where a sandstone cliff obscured the arch once more; finally noticing that the others had halted, he returned to the one short stretch from which the span could be viewed.

When he had first espied the Rainbow, reported Cummings (1952:42) later,

I turned and shouted, "Eureka, here she is!" I was thinking of the tired boys behind us who had so patiently endured the long hard trip over cliffs and through canyons never before traversed by white men.

We had to climb a short slope to reach a bench along which we must travel to get to the arch. Our ponies were tired, so Mr. Wetherill and I jumped off to lead our horses up the slope, but Mr. Douglass put spurs to his horse and made it lope up the hill. Mr. Wetherill was too quick for him, however, springing on his pony, he reached the goal and passed under the arch first.

Thus, I was the first white man to see the Rainbow Bridge and John Wetherill was the first white man to pass under the great arch. Its real discoverers were the two Pahute Indians, Noscha and Noscha Begay.

Wetherill's expressed recollections differed from Cummings':

Nasjah Begay said we would see it (the Bridge) shortly. Douglass was next to the guide, his eye fixed on a branch canyon (the rincon) that led off to the right. Cummings was riding behind Douglass and I was behind him. I noted that he was keeping watch to the left, from which direction the arch is first seen. He saw it first and rode up beside Douglass and pointed it out to him.

Douglass didn't seem to appreciate Cummings' interest. I told the dean I would put him in ahead of Douglass if he wished, but he said he didn't want to appear rude. I thought it was just about up to someone to "appear rude" so I took it upon myself to ride ahead of Douglass. I was the first white man to pass under the bridge and was followed by Messrs. Douglass and Cummings in the order named. But Dean Cummings was the first white man to set eyes on it. There was plenty of glory to go round, and I have always been content with my little part. The real credit belongs to the Paiute Nasjah Begay, without whose knowledge of the trail the Bridge would probably not have been discovered for some years to come (Wetherill letter quoted in Frothingham 1932:43).

It seems likely that Wetherill's motives for "being rude" were loyalty to his client, his dislike of Douglass, and a bit of competitiveness. In later years, it was said that he had plunged ahead in order to prevent a diplomatic awkwardness between Cummings and Douglass should either of them be the "winner". "If...he, as guide...led the way himself, the two official leaders would share credit equally" (Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:171; also Comfort 1980:66). Douglass' version of the events is interesting: "Fortune favored me at the close, the Professor being some hundred feet in the rear when I reached the bridge. After him was an old gray pack horse, who, assisted by Jean Rogerson, seemed anxious to be the first pack to arrive.... To Jim (Mike's Boy) is due the credit of giving to the world the first knowledge of this remarkable monument; to the General Land Office belongs the credit for the discovery to civilization, and for its preservation as a National Monument" (W. Douglass 1955:30-31; also Anonymous 1909c). Contrary to all other commentators except Rogers (interview, 5-9-90; Scher 1973), including his own packer, Dan Perkins (Crampton 1961), Douglass attributed first knowledge of the bridge to Mike's Boy; he also completely neglected to mention either the party's initial sighting of Rainbow Bridge or to specify Wetherill's priority of arrival. The attribution may reflect a sincere belief; the omissions are suppressions of vital facts even though literal truth is not violated since Douglass spoke of the "rivalry" only in terms of himself versus Cummings and in terms of which of them would be first at the bridge. Judd (1967b:30-31) later claimed a small distinction for himself, that of taking the first photograph of Rainbow Bridge, from a little beyond the initial sighting point. Official photographer Stewart Young took additional photos, also subsequently claiming priority. [15](#)

AT THE BRIDGE

A little after 11:30 A.M., the hot, weary expedition members unsaddled beneath the northeastern base of the bridge. The

horses, some with bleeding hooves, were led down-canyon to water but were too exhausted to graze until late afternoon. Wetherill and Beaugard somehow found the energy to climb the southwesterly abutment of the bridge; but, unable to descend onto the back of the bridge without a rope, they built a little monument of concretions and descended once more (Judd 1927:14, 1967b:36, 1968:42).¹⁶ When Wetherill returned to report their failure to reach the bridge's back, Douglass (2-19-19; Anonymous 1909c) sent his two chainmen English and Rogerson, plus flagman Perkins, with the necessary ropes. They lowered themselves from the abutment down onto the southwestern limb of the bridge, and then clambered to the top. "Two steel tapes having a combined length of 333 feet were lowered over the edge to the bed of the stream below. Later I was lowered to the bridge and made measurements as to width. We were the only ones to reach the top of the bridge" (W. Douglass 1955:14).

But Cummings (1952:44) completely contradicted Douglass' statement. "The next morning we...(let) ourselves (by rope) down a steep bare slope to the level of the top of the arch so we could reach the crest...which gave us great satisfaction." Beaugard (1909) noted that Wetherill chiseled out toe-holds to facilitate access to the top of the span.

Although the novelty of the great arch excited immediate comment and activity, it took some time for the size, beauty, and sheer improbability of Rainbow Bridge to impress itself fully on the explorers. Only in recollection did a full sense of Rainbow's sublime grandeur emerge in the minds of the men who had stood there on August 14, 1909 (Young 1909, 1911; Anonymous 1961:1-C).

Some discussion apparently took place about what to call the bridge. Wetherill probably suggested the Navajo Na'nfzhoohf ("Bridge"). Douglass, who claimed that only Paiutes and not Navajos had known of the Bridge, seems to have urged a Paiute name. That tongue's space Under A Horse's Belly" was not too appealing, however. "While the question of a name was still being debated." wrote Douglass (2-19-19), "There appeared in the sky, as if in answer, a beautiful rainbow, the 'Barahoini' of the Paiutes." This story, forwarded in 1919, appears to be completely gratuitous, for in an October 29, 1909, letter Douglass suggested that Indian recognition of the bridge's rainbow form justified adoption of either the Paiute or the Navajo name for the feature.

The afternoon was spent in various ways. Photographs and measurements were taken, and Beaugard made the first drawing (Jones 1983), a pencil sketch from the downstream side. Some of the travelers frolicked in pools, presumably at the Narrows, two miles downstream, where Rainbow Bridge Canyon enters Forbidding Canyon.

Six members of the Cummings party, including Beaugard, Judd, and Cummings (1952:43-44), walked down Forbidding Canyon (Aztec Creek) the remaining three miles or so to the Colorado River in Glen Canyon. There, according to Judd (1927:15, 1967b:36, 1968:42), they saw a wrecked "gold dredge" (no doubt, an ordinary boat), miners' tools, camp equipment, and other signs of Anglo activity, including, according to Beaugard (1909), names of miners scrawled in charcoal. Darkness overtook the hikers on the return, and they had to use matches at difficult places. It was a bruised, wet, and cold bunch that stumbled into the camp beneath the bridge near midnight.

Malcom Cummings (1940:25) recalled an incident of the following morning:

We were to pack up and start on the return trip to Oljato. Breakfast over we began our preparations, while Stuart Young, interested in leaving a permanent record, busied himself carving on the cliff wall below the arch in small letters the fact that the arch was discovered on this particular date by the Cummings party. There was a commotion in his direction. Douglas(s) was objecting. This was to be a national monument, and marking on or defacing there was a misdemeanor subject to fine and imprisonment. My father stepped in to the situation to placate matters. I believe there was a compromise and the defacement became legal when the carving showed discovery by the Cummings-Douglas(s) parties.

Wetherill also apparently pecked "J. Wetherill Aug. 14 1909" into a rock high in a ravine near the attached end of the bridge (Chidester 1969:218). Another curious issue about inscriptions ultimately arose. Judd (1967b:36) wrote, "Several individuals who were not present at the discovery have since offered narratives of the Rainbow Bridge expedition differing from that

herein. Some have even claimed that names of earlier visitors were erased by the 1909 party,” which Judd denied. [17](#)

THE RETURN JOURNEYS

The Utah party planned to return to Oljeto by way of Neetsin Canyon, a tributary of upper Navajo Canyon, in order to look for a rumored cliff dwelling. For his part, Douglass wished to survey the bridge area and the Tsegi ruins in order to segregate them from the public domain as national monuments; however, Perkins, his packer, informed the surveyor that the suffering horses could not stand a return to Oljeto and then a trip into the Tsegi. The solution was for the government party to return to Oljeto via Tsegi Canyon. To facilitate the survey, Cummings agreed to cede some of his limited provisions to Douglass, hoping to find provender at native camps along the route back. Since Mike’s Boy did not know the Tsegi area, Cummings (1952:44; M. Cummings 1940:25) assigned Dogeye Begay and Judd, very much contrary to the latter’s wishes, to guide the government man; this aid was not acknowledged in Douglass’ report.

Douglass’ survey of the 160 rugged acres around the bridge took longer than anticipated, continuing until August 18. At the end of the first day of laborious cliff climbing, the team ate its last food: one biscuit and a spoonful of boiled beans per man. “For the next days we had nothing whatever, but we succeeded in finishing the survey and reaching the supplies we had left on the way (at Cha Canyon)” (W. Douglass 1955:14; also Crampton 1960:102; Spraker 1974:329).

Dogeye Begay had given up and left to rejoin Cummings’ party the morning after their departure. Judd and the Douglass group passed upper Piute Canyon (probably crossing it) and continued southeasterly across Zilnez Mesa toward the Tsegi (U. S.G.S. 1892b). Judd (1909, 1927:15-16, 1959:12, 1968:42-44) described Mike’s Boy as telling Douglass that he was unfamiliar with the local trails but boasting to Judd that he had been over them many times. In any case, another Paiute was retained as a guide. Somewhere on the mesa, the party encountered scores of Navajos gathering for an Enemyway ceremonial (colloquially, “squaw dance”). Douglass (2-19-19) later claimed that Paiutes attending this curing and social ceremonial captured and threatened to kill him for his intrusion on this “secret” ritual. These ceremonials had been banned by the authorities, although Douglass and Judd were not aware of it at the time. The “threatening” incident was the encircling of the Anglos by “a couple of dozen young men, all mounted,” according to Judd (1927:16), led by “Old Baneed-i-cloy [Binii’ Diti’oi], [a] fanatical Navajo...[whose] hate for the white man was deep rooted.” Although they may have been concerned about the whites’ reporting the dance, more likely the Navajos were merely curious, for as Judd later learned, many youths in this remote area had never before seen a white. (According to Bert and Kate Tallsalt, “Navajo people themselves do not tell anything about the story Perkins [sic] tells of the Indian dance and trouble”, Baker 1974a).

Corn and watermelons were purchased from Navajos in the local area. Then, descending into Bubbling Springs Canyon in the Tsegi drainage, Judd led the government party to Kiet Seel ruin in Long Canyon, pointing out Betatakin Canyon en route, and he produced a sketch map indicating the locations of Betatakin and other ruins as well as pasturages and camping and watering places such as Bubbling Springs. On August 22, Judd and Dan Perkins departed, leaving Douglass to finish surveying the boundaries of the new Navajo National Monument, which was accomplished between August 21 and September 8. (The monument’s size was drastically reduced on March 14, 1912 (Fewkes 1911:5-6).) Judd (1927:16) and Perkins hastened back to Oljeto--Judd on foot, his horse having given out en route--where they rejoined the Utah team.

Cummings’ group left the bridge at noon of the second day and retraced its route as far as Shadow Valley, then turning southward toward Neetsin Canyon, apparently taking two days to reach that tributary of Navajo Canyon. At Neetsin, they hoped to obtain flour, sugar, and coffee at “Pinnietin’s camp.” But since no one was there, after using the last of their staples at breakfast the travelers were obliged to go back northward, in heavy rain, toward Nasja’s homestead in Piute Canyon. After a difficult descent, which did additional damage to their horses’ hooves, they arrived in late afternoon but found that the elderly Paiute had little flour and no sugar or coffee and was unwilling to part with any sheep or kid. Wetherill was only able--and for an exorbitant price--to arrange for the old and only billygoat in the camp to be butchered, and green corn was gathered from the field and parched. Some of this food was taken along to sustain the men the next day and part of the following one as they returned through the rain to Oljeto, although the tough goatflesh was nearly inedible (Beauregard 1909; Judd 1927:16; M. Cummings 1940:25; B. Cummings 1952:44). [18](#)

Despite the unpleasantness of two days and nights of heavy rain, “there was a compensation in it,” wrote Young (1911:19-20): the group witnessed two mud-laden streams of water pitch over precipices and plunge hundreds of feet into the canyons below.

After a few days at the trading post, it was time for the two university students to return to Salt Lake City for the beginning of the fall term. Wetherill assigned Dogeye Begay to guide the young men as far as Bluff City (for the probable route, see Turner 1962b: map). They departed with Beauregard on August 24. After crossing Monument Valley (“Monument(al) Park”), they reached the San Juan River near Comb Ridge and found the water to be in flood. None of the boys could swim, so Dogeye Begay got some other Navajos to take the party’s belongings across on their heads, swam the horses across, and towed along a cottonwood log to which the boys clung. Although Judd and Young doffed all their clothes for the fording, tall, red-headed, freckled Don Beauregard modestly donned a makeshift red-bandana breech-clout, to the amusement of the Navajo women gathered on the bank to watch the crossing (Judd 1909, 1968:44). (The ford became obsolescent later in the year, when a bridge was completed downstream at Goodridge [Mexican Hat], Utah [Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:181].)

Judd and his fellow students arrived in Bluff City on August 27. Young reportedly was interviewed in Salt Lake City on August 31 by a representative of the Deseret Evening News; this may have been by telephone, as Judd (1909) later said he did not reach the capital until September 3. A story appeared in the September 2 edition (Anonymous 1909a). An article had appeared earlier in the day in the Montezuma Journal, a Cortez, Colorado, paper (Anonymous 1909g). The students may have gone eastward from Bluff by wagon to catch the Denver and Rio Grande Western branch line rather than returning due northward via Moab; an article also appeared in Moab’s Grand Valley Times on September 2 (Anonymous 1909e), but the word may have been communicated by wire. The role of the Cummings party was stressed in these articles; Douglass was not mentioned. Judd apparently was determined that his uncle, and not the obnoxious Douglass, get credit for the discovery. The story in the Cortez paper probably was planted to antagonize Douglass, who was headquartered there. [19](#)

In his unpublished autobiography, Byron Cummings (n.d.:119B-121) included a revealing account of Douglass’ return to Oljeto and Bluff City:

A few days after the departure of the boys the Douglas[s] Party rolled in about midday. Everybody seemed tired and touchy and wanted to be waited on all at once. But soon we satisfied their appetite for sweets and pop and they settled down to a quiet rest. Dr. [sic] Douglas[s], however, informed us that he wanted to outfit his expedition immediately to return to Nitsin Canyon where he had heard there was a big cave ruin. This announcement immediately was met with opposition from the Utah boys of Douglas[s] party. Dan Perkins told Mr. Douglas[s] that his horses could not make another trip to Nitsin--that they were too heavy for that work, their backs were in bad shape from having to carry the boxes of his equipment that were difficult to keep solid and steady on horses’ backs in that rough country. He also reminded Mr. Douglas[s] that his father had promised him the outfit for a month only and that the time had already passed. He needed to be home with their teams in order to harvest their yearly grain crop. Mr. Mortenson [i.e., Rogerson] stated that he had agreed to be a part of the expedition for a month only and that unless he returned to Monticello before the frost came, he would lose his entire summer’s work on his ranch. He was proving up on a 160 acres on a homestead for himself and so he couldn’t afford to lose his crop. Mike [Jack Keenan?], a man whom Mr. Douglas[s] had picked up in Bluff, told him that he and his whole expedition might go to the hot place before he would make a return trip to Rainbow Bridge or Nitsin Canyons. Mr. Douglas[s] still seemed very suspicious of me and declared that this was mutiny and was all my fault. That I was stirring up trouble because I was jealous of him and determined to prevent his staying in the country. In vain I tried to reason with him and get him to see that Mr. Perkins and Mr. Mortenson neither could prolong their stay in northern Arizona. He was very determined and said that if the men would not consent to outfit and go to the Nitsin, then they had to start for Bluff [City]. I pointed out to him there was a heavy storm gathering over the Monuments through which it would be wiser to keep their men and outfits there under cover until morning when they could make a fresh start after a good night’s rest. But nothing would do--they must pack up their outfit and get started immediately for Bluff [City]. They got ready and succeeded in starting out about three o’clock. Dan Perkins told me afterward that the storm struck them before they passed the Monuments and they had to camp cold and wet in the open. The next day

when they reached the river it was so swollen by the storm that it was not safe to attempt to swim the horses across. The current was too swift, the water too deep. Mr. Douglas[s] was determined that they should put the horses in and he knew they would reach the other side all right. Dan, however, was equally determined and told him he was not going to run the risk of losing one or more of their valuable horses on a fool hardy attempt to make them swim in that flood. So they camped on the bank of the San Juan for two days before the river lowered so they dared to swim the stream with the stock. Dan said he had to rustle the Indian camps nearby to secure green corn to keep the party from starvation while Douglas[s] foamed and fretted at the delay [although they did revisit and photograph Sixteen Room Ruin (Casa del Eco, Bluff Ruin) (Douglass, 9-13-09)]. Dan also stated that after they reached Bluff [City] Douglas[s] settled with his father for the outfit and expenses, and went into Colorado to the railroad. He sent a letter back to his [Perkins'] father stating that he noticed in looking over the accounts that there was an item of 80 cents for watermelon one day. Mr. Douglas[s] said he knew the Government would not stand for that and asked Mr. Perkins to rebate 40 cents on that item. Dan's remark: "Father, like a fool, sent him the 40 cents!"

With regard to these events, Douglass (9-11-09) reported to Washington that "All of my party with the exception of my head chainman, Mr. English, refused to return to the field. I was compelled to send my packs to Bluff (City) with the horses as they were worn out, backs covered with sores, and unfit for further use. While I could get horses from the Indians, I could get no English-speaking assistant of any kind."

After measuring Rainbow Bridge, Douglass specifically stated to the Utah party that he did not want them to disclose the dimensions he had obtained (Judd 1909); Cummings (1909) wrote them down in his notebook. When Douglass (9-19-09) reached Cortez on September 11, he was horrified to see in a recent issue of the local paper (Anonymous 1909g) a story to the effect that Rainbow Bridge's discovery had been "by members of the Utah Archaeological Society" and to find that the article included the bridge's dimensions. That very day, he fired off a letter to the Commissioner of the General Land Office, writing,

This statement is entirely untrue. I learned of the bridge in question from a Paiute Indian known as Mike's Boy last October and reported it to you on Oct. 4 [actually, October 7], 1908. And received your instructions to locate and survey it.

On reaching Oljato, Utah, Aug. 11 [sic], 1909, I found several gentlemen from Salt Lake City ready to start to look for it, having obtained information from a person [Wetherill] who received it from me. They accompanied me as a separate party but taking advantage of my guide 'Mike's Boy.' A local guide was employed fourthly. As representing the General Land Office I was first to reach the bridge after the 3 guides. The head of the Utah party came next [after] me.

They made no measurements of any [kind,] and I expressly requested them to refrain from publishing my measurements without first getting your permission to do so. As gentlemen I had supposed they would not betray the confidence I placed in them....

No member of their party reached the top of the bridge.

The full credit, and sole credit for the discovery and survey of the bridge belongs exclusively to the General Land Office and not to the Utah Archaeological Society.

AFTERMATH

Except for a brief trip to Salt Lake City to take Malcolm back to school, Cummings (n.d.:131-140, 1952:11-13, 22-23, and letter quoted in Hargrave 1935:12) remained in the field through December, excavating at Betatakin and elsewhere, and then returned to prepare for a long sojourn in Germany to study Classical archaeology. During September, Jesse Walter Fewkes (1911:1,4) of the Bureau of American Ethnology in Washington, D.C., appeared, to examine the Tsegi ruins, later claiming to be their discoverer (J. Wetherill 1955:24). Edgar L. Hewett, Director of American Archaeology, Archaeological Institute of America, was another 1909 visitor (Cummings' work was under Hewett's general direction) (B. Cummings 1910:23).

In December 1910, the Wetherills moved their trading operation from Oljeto in Utah to Kayenta, a few miles south in Arizona, whence John guided many parties to Rainbow Bridge in succeeding years, often retaining Nasja Begay and Dogeye

Begay as assistants (Roosevelt 1913:314; Grey 1915:15; Comfort 1980:101, 105-107, 123-124). Nasja Begay died during the influenza epidemic of 1918 (B. Cummings 1952:44-45). Wetherill also developed a shortcut route across Nokai Mesa and Nokai Canyon, which came to be known as the Wetherill Trail (Frothingham 1932:43-44; U.S.G.S. 1953b). He was appointed Custodian of Rainbow Bridge and Navajo national monuments (Anonymous 1946). On August 21, 1909, Douglass (8-21-09, 1955:15) reported his survey of the bridge and the boundaries of the proposed national monument. Between October 12 and 27, he made a return journey there with Navajo guide Whitehorse Begay, assistant John English, and Clyde Colville (1909) as chainman and flagman, to begin to tie in the survey to the Arizona-Utah boundary; he also measured Owl and White Crag arches (W. Douglass 1909b). The area segregated was designated Rainbow Bridge National Monument by president Taft's proclamation 1043 on May 30, 1910 (Miser and others 1923:528). [20](#)

THE CONTINUING CONTROVERSY

Douglass went on to other things (Douglass 1917), but the effects of his self-proclaimed rivalry with Cummings lingered on. Cummings continued to maintain for the rest of his life--though not belligerently--that he had been the first white to see Rainbow Bridge. Cummings was a man whose enthusiasm, integrity, and generosity inspired something akin to adoration in many of those with whom he came into contact (Mott 1939:4-5; A. Douglass 1950:2; Judd 1950:11; ?Tanner 1954). Not the least of his devotees was his nephew Neil Judd (1954b, 1954c). A circa September 20, 1909 (Anonymous 1909c), newspaper article raised Judd's ire. It asserted that "An early report...from Salt Lake City crediting the representatives of the Utah Archaeological Society with the discovery...is entirely erroneous. The honor belongs to Mr. Douglas(s)." Rebuttal peices appeared in the Herald Republican (Anonymous 1909f, 1909b), and Judd (1909) penned a major article on the discovery for the Deseret Evening News. He began, "Some people delight in reaching out for those things to which they are not entitled.... They can secure the public pat in no other way." In the piece, Douglass is named, and accused of circulating reports intended to convey "false impressions." Another article, entitled "Jealousy Besets Gov't Man," appeared in Moab's Grand Valley Times (Anonymous 1909d). Thus, the battle was joined. Judd wrote that the glory was "scarcely worth the quarrel," but over the next 60 years, he produced several praiseful defenses of Cummings' claim to the discovery, and seems to have indulged in his own promotion of certain false impressions. [21](#)

Cummings tended to be rather modest in his statements. In 1910 he wrote, "This (Bridge) was probably first visited by white men when the Uth Archaeological Expedition and government surveying party under W. B. Douglass of Washington, D.C., found the structure August 14th, 1909" (B. Cummings 1910:16-17).

For his part, Douglass (1909) continued to tell his version of the story in newspaper interviews. The government seems to have accepted his position from the start, and he continued to complain to authorities whenever the Cummings-Wetherill claims were forwarded. In May 1916, a year after Zane Grey (1915) publicized his trip to Rainbow, Foster's Travel Magazine published a story featuring Wetherill's role in the bridge discovery. Douglass (1916) responded by sending in a copy of his official report of 1910, which the journal published and endorsed; Douglass obtained offprints.

Subsequent to geologist Herbert E. Gregory's (1916:45) statement that John Wetherill had learned about Rainbow Bridge from "a Paiute herdsman" (Nasja Begay), Douglass (3-7-18) again complained, this time to the Secretary of the Interior:

Certain persons are trying to deprive the Interior Department and the General Land Office of the credit for the discovery of the world's greatest natural bridge....Erroneous information has even passed into a government publication....

Prof. Gregory was misinformed as to where Mr. Wetherill got his information. He received it from me in 1908, when in November of that year I stopped at his house in Oljato, Utah, on my first attempt to reach this bridge..... Mr. Wetherill discredited my information, but said a Navajo had reported a bridge on Navajo creek in Arizona. This bridge has never been located.

This issue came up again early in 1919. Douglass (now a U. S. Cadastral Engineer) wrote to the Director of the National Park Service, "There has been a persistent effort in certain sources to take from the General Land Office the credit of the discovery of this great natural wonder, and an effort to change the name (from the Paiute 'Barahoine' proposed by Douglass, to the

Navajo 'Nonnezoshe' forwarded by Wetherill and Cummings) is a part of the propaganda....In the interest of truth, can you not embody the substance of this letter in your report on the national Park Service?' (W. Douglass 1-19-19).

On February 2, 1919, Douglass wrote to the Director of the Park Service that

In 1909, he [Wetherill] was employed by Prof. Cummings...and told Cummings of the Bridge. They plan[n]ed to beat me to it, but failed, as I reached it before Cummings. I made no effort to get in front of the Indians. However it never occurred to me that Cummings would attempt to claim credit for the Bridge. You may well imagine my surprise to find my official measurements stolen and published as his own (he made none), before my report reached the General Land Office, causing me much embarrassment. The measurements had been given him as confidential, and he was so told. Incidentally, in the same article, he claimed the discovery of the bridge and has been claiming it ever [since]....

I had no thought of claiming any personal credit for this work, but I do want the credit to go fully to the General Land Office....These "Dr. Cook" methods of others are aggravating, and a lie to the public.

Douglass (2-19-19) submitted, some two weeks later, an embroidered third-person account of his role in the discovery, which the Director turned over to the Chief of the Educational Division for him to prepare a press release (Mather 3-13-19). It is not clear what elicited Douglass' correspondence, but Judd (1959) submitted to the Park Service later that year a manuscript emphasizing Cummings' role and minimizing Douglass'. [22](#)

In Kayenta, "These discussions [about whose version was correct] were continued by their [the Wetherills'] eminent guests around the dinner table at the Wetherill Lodge. To lay rest the doubts, pros and cons, a number of persons, along with John and Louisa, commissioned the artist E. Raymond Ormsby [sic] of [Burlingame,] California to create a bronze table to be erected at Rainbow Bridge [commemorating Nasja Begay's role as guide]....It was dedicated...on September 23, 1927" (Comfort 1980:69).

The sculptor was actually Joseph Jacinto Mora (1876-1947), not Armsby; the latter was the San Francisco "clubman and capitalist" who (in 1923) suggested, and later financed, the plaque. The inscription read, "To commemorate the Paiute Nasjah Begay who first guided the White Man to Nonnezoshi August 1909" (Armsby 1927; Davidson 1927; Anonymous 1927, 1928, Burgdorff 1967; Chidester 1969:223; Goldwater 1970:68).

When approving the plaque in 1924, the Park Service erroneously assumed, because of Douglass' communications, that the Indian to be honored was Mike's Boy (Cammerer 1-17-24). When Wetherill wrote (1-28-24) that Nasja Begay was the proposed honoree, Director Stephen Mather (2-8-24) solicited an attestation from Custodian Wetherill, who wrote (2-25-24) that he was also asking Cummings and Judd to submit statements. "Dean Cummings was the first white man...to see the Bridge and it was not until he called Mr. Douglass' attention to it that Mr. Douglass saw it...and it is more than doubtful if he (Douglass) would ever have reached it under the guidance of Jim (Mike's Boy). " Judd (3-8-24), by this time Curator of American Archaeology at the U.S. National Museum, sent in a statement similar to others he had made. Cummings' (3-6-24) statement arrived about the same time; in it he wrote, "This whole controversy is petty but is due to the fact that Mr. Douglass, both in his preliminary report and his regular report, tried to utterly ignore our party and take all credit unto himself and his Paiute guide (despite all the aid we gave Douglass)." Nasja Begay's name finally was allowed to be the one used on the plaque. But before the plaque was installed, Cummings (1926) published, in *Progressive Arizona*, a brief piece on the bridge's "discovery," and a version of Douglass' highly colored 1919 press-release text appeared in *The Mentor* (Anonymous 1926); the surveyor was apparently not giving up.

Nor did the controversy end with the placement of the plaque. That same year, a road to Navajo Mountain was completed. "Important people contacted [local traders] Herbert and S. I. [Richardson] in an endeavor to name the road and several trails for various individuals among the 1909 discoverers. These people grew angry when their demands were ignored" (Richardson 1986:61). And in 1927, Judd penned his definitive account of the 1909 expedition for *National Parks Bulletin*, stressing Nasja Begay and Cummings and downplaying Mike's Boy and Douglass.

Douglass died in 1947, but the anonymous piece from *The Mentor* was reprinted in *Hobbies* in 1949. In 1955, the year after Cummings' death and three years after publication of his *Indians I Have Known* (in which he discussed the 1909 expedition), the Bureau of Land Management, successor to the General Land Office, published Douglass' 1910 report as the cover story of its organ *Our Public Lands*. The editor asserted that Douglass was "probably the first white man to see the natural wonder" (W. Douglass 1955:1).

In 1915, Cummings left the University of Utah to direct the Arizona State Museum, and he became a popular professor and dean (and, for a time, interim president) at the University of Arizona. A praiseful brief biography in *Arizona Highways* named him as the first white to see Rainbow Bridge (Mott 1939:40). Following his demise in 1954, Cummings' affluent Tucson patrons established the Cummings Publication Council to issue a volume intended mainly to "set the record straight" about the 1909 expedition by reproducing the testimony of members of the Utah party; it appeared 50 years after the event, and a partial reprinting and pro-Cummings commentary by Tucson graphic-arts teacher Othis H. Chidester was issued in 1969 by the Tucson Corral of the Westerners. And in 1967, Judd (1967b) published a revised version of his 1927 *National Parks Bulletin* article, in *Arizona Highways*.

Sometime after the creation of Lake Powell in 1963, Clarence Rogers, a Blanding, Utah, rancher, river guide, and friend of Mike's Boy (now known as Jim Mike), visited Rainbow Bridge and saw the plaque honoring Nasja Begay. As a result, Rogers began promoting Jim's version, which he had first heard in about 1939 (apparently through Blanding builder and missionary George Hearst). As a result, in 1972 Rogers took Melvin J. Smith and Jay Haymond of the Utah State Historical Society plus trader LeRay Hunt to visit Jim at his White Rock, Utah, home. An interview interpreted by Jim's grand-daughter Mary Jane Yazzie was recorded (Harpster 1974; Anonymous 1974e; Haymond and others 1985). Rogers could not interest the *Deseret News* in the story, but *Denver Post* reporter Zeke Scher and others subsequently became involved. Jim Mike, who was born about 1873, now contended that he and his father, (Big) (Mouth) Mike, had lived in the Paiute Canyon area when Jim was a young man. One day in 1885, he, his father, and Nasja had been looking for feed for their horses. "I went into this canyon and saw this bent rock with a hole in it...I ran back scared and told my father. He and Nasja left without going to see it...(Nasja Begay) was a small boy....He never saw it then....Rainbow Bridge belongs to me....I was there first" (Scher 1973; Ekker 1974b; Hudson 1974; Rogers 1983). According to Rogers (interview, 5-9-90), Jim Mike said that Nasja had accompanied them but that only he, Jim, actually saw the bridge; that Nasja Begay heard about it from his father and later asked Jim how to get there; that while at Piute Canyon, Jim explained the route to him; that this is how Nasja Begay was able to guide the white explorers. In a 1972 interview, Jim said that he did not know how Nasja Begay had learned of the bridge but that he, Jim, had told Nasja Begay how to find it. Jim stated that he informed Douglass about the bridge, in Bluff City, only about three months after having found it, not 23 years after his discovery, as was later contended (Ekker 1974a, 1974b, 1978; Rogers 1983; Haymond and others 1985). It is also problematic as to how much we can credit Jim's story in light of the following: Judd's 1909 statement that Jim had admitted never having been to the bridge but that he had received information from Nasja Begay; Douglass' (10-7-08) statement that Jim had told him that "only he and one other Indian (Nasja Begay?) knows its whereabouts" (emphasis added); Wetherill's, Cummings', and Judd's later reports of Jim's not knowing the route to the bridge; and Douglass' saying that Nasja Begay was "supposed to have a better acquaintance with the local trails." Jim may have simply adopted and adapted the long-dead Nasja Begay's story in order to gain some attention. On the other hand, Jim's 1909 "ignorance" of the trails may merely have reflected the whites' interpretation of his stating that the their farm horses could not make it over the rough trail; and there is Frothingham's statement that Nasja Begay had recommended Jim as a guide to the bridge before Nasja Begay had been there. Since in 1909 Jim would not have been to Rainbow Bridge in nearly a quarter century, his recollection of the trail could indeed have dimmed. In any case, despite Judd's anti-Douglass and anti-Jim Mike 1967 article, the National Park Service was urged successfully to honor the Paiute; and in a 1974 ceremony, Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton presented Jim with \$50.00 "back pay," a new blanket, and a citation for his 1909 guide work (Anonymous 1974a, 1974b, 1974c, 1974d, 1974e, 1974f; Associated Press 1974a, 1974b; Harpster 1974); Douglass had paid Jim \$30.00 for his services in 1909 (Haymond and others 1985). After the ceremony and the erection of a temporary marker, someone--Jim Mike partisans, according to rumor--removed the Nasja Begay plaque from the bridge and threw it into Lake Powell, from which it was later recovered (Scher 1978).

On July 4, 1984, seven years after Jim's death, the administration of Lake Powell National Recreation Area got "a plaque equal to Begay's" (Anonymous 1984c) installed at the bridge (Anonymous 1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1984c; Betz 1984a, 1984b)

Douglass would have been pleased by the honoring of Jim. And the surveyor got in at least one last, posthumous “shot” in 1974: Douglass’ “discovery” was described in a book on the genealogy of the Boone family (Spraker 1974:329), presumably on the basis of material supplied to the compiler by Douglass or his relatives.

MOOT POINT?

Frothingham (1932:30-39) mentioned John Wetherill’s abortive attempt to reach Rainbow Bridge in the autumn of 1908. Kluckhohn (1927:201-202) wrote that Louisa “induced her husband to set forth in quest of the solid rainbow. Two expeditions (emphasis added) reached Navajo Mountain, only to be turned back by mountains of stone which seemed insurmountable barriers to further progress.” Louisa’s autobiography mentions no 1908 attempt by John, although the book does refer to Clyde Colville’s having unsuccessfully searched for the arch (Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:130-132).

According to Judd (1909), after learning that Nasja and Nasja Begay had visited the bridge, Louisa “told the boy that she wanted him to go, if she ever made the trip to the arch. The young Paiute promised to take her to it when summer came again.”

In view of the above, it is interesting to take note of remarks made by Louisa Wetherill in 1923 while on a lecture tour in California without her spouse (Comfort 1980:130-132). For instance, after she learned of Rainbow Bridge, “Mrs. Wetherill and her husband explored the region told of by this Navajo [Sharkie] and found the bridge. It was at a subsequent date that Professor Cummings and Wetherill made the ‘official’ discovery” (Anonymous 1923b). And, “Guided by this old leader, Mr. and Mrs. Wetherill later went into this almost inaccessible region, and there like a “solidified rainbow” they found this marvellous arch of rock.... The following year, 1909, Prof. Byron Cummings of the University of Utah went over the same route with Mr. Wetherill and made the ‘official discovery’” (Anonymous 1923a). Again, “she and her husband found the bridge.... Later still, Wetherill and Prof. Cummings made the official discovery of the bridge” (Mackendrick 1923:62). Louisa’s grandson William John Wetherill (interview, 12-16-88) heard similar intimations in his grandmother’s lectures. We are obliged, then, to wonder whether Louisa was fabricating this pre-Cummings discovery in order to improve the dramatic quality of her lectures, or whether this earlier expedition had indeed taken place but normally was not mentioned in order not to disillusion or embarrass Cummings. I am inclined toward the latter interpretation.

First of all, this seems very much in character for John. In 1929, a writer, speaking of Wetherill’s drollery in playing down dramatic landforms, stated the following: “Wetherill prefers to sit back and let you find the view for yourself....it is, after all, John Wetherill who makes the biggest fool of you. Because he lets you work your own undoing and hoax yourself.... Wetherill is the top kidder” (Hall 1929:12). In 1946, John’s son Ben told O. “Dock” Marston that

Sharkey, a one eyed Navajo living around where Shonto now is took my father to the top of Navajo Mountain and showed him, in the afternoon, where Rainbow Bridge was. You could see the shadow best in the afternoon and by it locate the bridge. I don’t know what date it was, but it was a long time before the trip into the bridge in 1909 that made the official discovery of it.

never heard my father ever say he had been to the natural bridge prior to 1909 when Nasja Begay took them in there. He could have been. It was my father’s way to keep quiet, doing no talking at all, once he took people to some place they hired him to (B. Wetherill 1946).

According to one of the Wetherills’ granddaughters, Dorothy Leake (interview, 5-12-83), “My grandfather would find things, not say anything, and let others get the credit.” A Wetherill grandson and a grandnephew both agreed that this would have been quite characteristic for John, although not for the more forward and domineering Louisa (William J. Wetherill, interview, 12-16-88; Tom O. Wetherill, interview 12-16-88). Great-grandson Harvey Leake wrote, “Wetherill sometimes used such means of honoring his clients for the accomplishments of expeditions they financed and downplayed the significance of his own contributions” (Leake and Topping 1987:162). In fact, a specific example involving a natural arch has been reported. Wetherill is described as having said,

Zeke [Ezekiel] Johnson [of Blanding] and I were with him [New Yorker Charles Bernheimer] that summer [of 1927] and we knew he wanted to discover a bridge, so we decided to arrange it. We knew there was a bridge out there and we thought it would be nice for him to discover it. We took him to it, and he thought he was the first white man to see it. Hell, Zeke and I knew it was there all along.

And now he wants me to put up a (12 by 18-inch) plaque [at Wetherill's suggestion, according to Bernheimer (1936)] saying how he discovered it and naming it after his wife. Damn outrage! (Smith 1977:83-84)

Bernheimer (1927) recorded that he had been told of the arch by expedition wrangler Old Mike, a Ute [Mike's Boy's father?], who promised to show Bernheimer a bridge bigger than Rainbow, for a substantial cash consideration. Wetherill (having coached him?) then used Mike as guide to the arch (Smith 1977:85). Wetherill had also let Bernheimer "discover" the southerly (Redbud Pass) route to Rainbow Bridge in 1922, which Wetherill had found in 1911 (Leake and Topping 1987:162; there is an inscription, "JW 3-14-1911" in lower Redbud Pass (Jones 1978b.:27)).

Although Frothingham (1925:35) attributed discovery of Rainbow Bridge to John Wetherill, according to the latter's own testimony to the Park Service and in remarks to an interviewer, he explicitly disavowed prior discovery. "'Not that I didn't try to find it,' he admitted. 'I did hunt for the Bridge, but I was let away from the search by the discovery of three groups of hitherto unknown cliff ruins--Betatakin, Inscription House, and Kietsiel. After all, archeology is my line. Nasja and Nasja-begay--the Pahutes--led us to Rainbow Bridge. The Indians found it long before the white man came'" (MacClary 1938:34). But "discovery" of these cliff dwellings does not really seem relevant to any pre-1909 search for the bridge. Kiet Seel had been found by Richard and Al Wetherill and Charlie Mason in 1894. John is supposed to have first visited it in June 1909, accompanied by Cummings (1952:11); Inscription House also was "discovered" that July (Judd 1954c:155). Finally, as described above, Betatakin was "discovered" on August 9, 1909 (just before the Cummings-Douglass Bridge trek), and only an hour was spent there (J. Wetherill 1955; Comfort 1980:56-60). If John is correctly quoted and was, indeed, diverted in 1907 or 1908 by examination of these cliff dwellings, then his and Cummings' "discovery" of them in 1909 was staged by John. Cummings (1952) certainly believed his party to have been the Anglo discoverers of Betatakin and Inscription House, although perhaps not of Kiet Seel.²⁴ But if these ruins had not been located before June 1909, then Wetherill's alleged reason for not having pursued the bridge more assiduously is false.

One must also keep in mind Wetherill's "insatiable passion to learn what was around the next bend in the canyon" (Leake and Topping 1987:146). "A never-waning curiosity goaded him into any difficult place where something of natural or historic significance might be hidden" (Jones 1979b:30). As Charles Bernheimer (1927) wrote, "He can not ever be stopped from reaching his goal." Thus, it seems unlikely that Wetherill would have rested before locating the reported stone rainbow.

It seems extremely probable, then, that all of the contentions among Cummings, Douglass, and their partisans were irrelevant. After having agreed in 1908 to help Cummings "discover" the bridge in 1909, the Wetherills apparently had been unable to wait. John and Louisa seemingly had gone to Navajo Mountain with Sharkie in 1907 and had seen the span from the mountain's top. Indians from the Navajo Mountain area have since contended that they remembered seeing 'Ashihi Binaa' 'Adini (Sharkie) guiding the first party of white toward the bridge (Baker 1974a; Drake, interview, 8-21-85). Subsequently, the Wetherills seem to have arranged with Nasja Begay (Sharkie having died) to take them there, and to have gone; this probably was in November of 1908. They may also have dissuaded Mike's Boy from guiding Douglass in December 1908. When Cummings arrived in 1909, they said nothing of all this, but allowed him to believe that they were embarking on an expedition of discovery. The postulated earlier trip would certainly explain how Wetherill (but not Mike's Boy) was able to find his way unerringly through the trailless slickrock country with--supposedly--nothing to guide him but his memory of the Paiute Nasja's recollections, which presumably was communicated in Navajo, a language foreign to them both and one John is said not really to have spoken (Hunt, interview, 12-17-88). In fact, Judd's (1909) perception of the reason for John's willingness to proceed was that John recollected Louisa's report of what Nasja Begay had told her about the route!

EPILOGUE ABOUT A POSSIBLE PROLOGUE

Beyond the probable Wetherill "pre-discovery," the prime irony about the controversy that ensued is that it seems highly likely that no member of the Cummings/Douglass party--not even John Wetherill--was the first literate Caucasian to see or

visit Rainbow Bridge. It is entirely possible that Mormon pioneers, fur-trappers, or even Spanish prospectors came upon the great arch; if so, they apparently failed to record the occurrence (Colton 1932:68). ²⁵ But despite denials by former prospector Cass Hite, it seems a near certainty that Anglo-American gold- and silver-seekers operating in the Glen Canyon-Navajo Mountain area during the last 20 years of the nineteenth century saw the bridge (Cummings 1910:17-18; Crampton 1959: 16-38, 1960:73-104, 1986). In view of the thoroughness of exploration by these prospectors, plus the undoubted attraction of Navajo Mountain as a potential mineralized area and the ease of traveling from the river to Rainbow Bridge, it seems inconceivable that the rock span was not “discovered” more than once. As Judd (1967:36) acknowledged, the 1909 party found modern mining tools in the prehistoric ruin at the mouth of Forbidding Canyon, only 4.5 miles from where the bridge could be seen. ²⁶ Nevertheless, no formal reports of visits to the landform are known to have been made before 1909.

This is not the place to elaborate on the subject of possible pre-1909 Anglo visits to the bridge, but we may take note of the fact that in later years claims to this effect surfaced. In 1925, Rupert L. Larson (1925:6), an advertising man associated with Navajo Mountain traders, wrote an article for the Los Angeles Examiner, in which he stated, “the facts are practically incontrovertible that John [sic] Em[m]erson, accompanied by a man now living, carved his name and the date ‘1882’ on the great arch. Early visitors to the bridge mentioned this name and date, but we could not find it, but did note that two inscriptions had been effaced from the rock, only that of the 1909 expedition remaining....one wonders if and why John Em[m]erson’s name, carved in 1882, should have been effaced.”

One of the “early visitors” was apparently Indian trader William Franklyn Williams. In 1929, he wrote a statement (Williams 1990), which was later seen and paraphrased by Weldon Heald (1955). In 1958, Williams’ daughter Bernetta published a book that included a summary of her father’s tale (Yost 1958:124-133). The latter is far from clear, but Williams claimed to have often heard trappers, prospectors, and Hoskininni tell of the bridge. He said that as a teenager, he had visited Rainbow Bridge, in “Under The Arm Canyon.” about November 20, 1884, with his father Jonathan Patterson Williams, his brother Ben, and Hoskininni. They made another visit about February 15, 1885. Williams recollected seeing there, “cut on the base of the free end of the arch,” the names Billy (William Albert) Ross, Montgomery, Jim Black (a cow puncher for Flagstaff’s A-1 ranch), George Em(m)erson, Ed Randolph, and (N. N.) Wydel. Some of these inscriptions were more weathered than others. Down-canyon, on the cliffs, were other names, in charcoal. If these carved names were shallow and exposed, they might have weathered away between 1884 and 1909; the Cummings-Douglass inscription seems to have done so by the 1960s (Chidester 1969). On the other hand, inscriptions elsewhere in the area have survived. I have seen, at the south base of Navajo Mountain, near old Rainbow Lodge, and inscription reading, “Geo. Emmerson Apl. 1882” (Luckert 1977:59; Richardson 1986:57), and the inscriptions “G. Emmerson,” “Geo. Emmerson,” “M. S. Foote, Dec. 28th, 1881,” “J. P. Williams,” “Bowen,” and (Robert) “Ferguson” appear in Aztec Canyon. Then, there are a number of late-nineteenth-century inscriptions at Tse Ya Toe Cave (Tseyaa To, “Cave Spring”) south of Navajo Mountain, including “J. P. Williams” (Knipmeyer 1989:23-28,38). Navajos do speak of an “Underarm Ridge” on the sacred route to Rainbow Bridge (Luckert 1977: 59), and there is an “Underarm Canyon” in the area (Longsalt 1973:169).

A 1930 statement of cowboy James W. Black indicates that he first heard of the bridge in 1890 at Bluff City, “from a number of Mormons who had been told of it by Ute Indians.” In 1891, he heard about the Williams’ 1884 trip and of a visit by prospector Cass Hite. In 1892, he, Al Brown, and George McDowell saw the span from the top of Navajo Mountain, where they met a Mr. Patterson, a prospector who said he had been in Rainbow Bridge Canyon. Black’s party then descended to the bridge, in “Under The Arm Canyon,” on and near which they saw more than 30 inscribed names, including those of the Williamses, Ed Randolph, W. A. (“Buckskin Billy”) Ross, George Emmerson, N N. Wydel, Joe Ashblock, Montgomery, Craig, C(arter) W. Wright, S(ilas) Jones, W(illiam), E. Mitchell, A(l) G. Turner, G. E. Choistila (sic, W. (Bill) Brockway, M. C. Young, J. E. H., and (Bill) Cade. Other Mitchell inscriptions in the region are accompanied by the date “1861” and the names “F(red) Smith” and “Seewar” or “Sethwor” (an Englishman (W. C. Seifert)). Most of these men were prospectors. The Black party exited the gorge via the well-established East Trail (apparently up “Horseshoe Canyon”). In 1893, Black revisited the bridge with Benton Gibson. In 1894-1895, he herded Escalante, Utah, Mormons’s horses at the mouth of the canyon and revisited the bridge.

Gladwell Richardson (1986:61-62, 87, 94-95), once a trader in the region and acquainted with many of the “old timers,” made the following observations:

The arch...had first been visited by beaver trappers. Then came prospectors seeking a lost gold mine. Scores of men saw the bridge long before 1909. Some of their names (one on the bridge and in Bridge Canyon) and the dates that were there include J. P. Williams, 1883; Ben and Bill Williams, 1884; George Emmerson, 1882; Ed (ward) Rangolph, 1880; (James W.) Jim Black, 1881; Alf Dickinson, 188; George McCormick, 1894; C. M. Wright, 1892; A. G. Turner, 1896; G. E. Choistilan (sic), 1888; W. Borckway, 1883; W. D. Young, 1882; J. E. H., 1880; John Hadley, 1885; and C. M. Cade, 1869 or 1889. These names had been cut with a chisel or marked with charcoal in many protected places on the bridge, in Bridge Canyon, and in canyons throughout the area around it. Probably for each one of those who left his name and date behind, fifty others didn't bother.

What I know of these men is the following: J. P. Williams took up a homestead in Blue Canyon in 1882, east of Redlake (Arizona)--Ben and Bill were his sons; Ed Randolph lived in Flagstaff until his death; Jim Black spent a lifetime in and out of Navajo Mountain country, and Jim Black Basin, not far from the bridge, is named for him; Alf Dickinson and George McCormick spent their lives at Flagstaff also; C. M. Wright and A. G. Turner found gold on Ashley Bar in the Colorado River; John Hadley was an early -day Indian trader, and some navajos around Tuba City bear his name.

Joe Lee, who left his name cut nowhere, spent the winter of 1879-1880 in Bridge Canyon with the family of Paiute chief Nasja, wintering horses. Joe Lee and Nasja's nephew, Nasja Begay (son of Nasja Soney), who led white men there in 1909, played under the arch as youngsters.

Over the years, a question has often been asked by the unthinking. If all these people actually saw Rainbow Bridge, why didn't they report such an astounding, wonderful object? They did, in fact, talk about it to others who were about to enter that far country. Then consider that there are a thousand square miles of southern Utah and northern Arizona containing natural bridges galore. Of what special interest to them was one more, when they were a dime a dozen?

Richardson was often a less-than-reliable reporter. Nevertheless, what he says is explicit and plausible, and tallies well with Williams' and Black's statements.

A fascinating fact is that a U.S.G.S. (1892a) topographic map, surveyed by a P. Holman in 1884, shows a canyon reaching the Colorado River in the position of Forbidding Canyon, with a branch corresponding to Rainbow Bridge Canyon. Perhaps this is based on information obtained from prospectors.

The Williamses and Black may or may not have seen Rainbow Bridge. George Emmerson and the others named may or may not have visited it. But it seems certain that some prospectors, and perhaps other travelers, were there decades before 1909 (Crampton 1964:154). This, the "great race" to be the first white at the stone rainbow, and the bickering that followed, were not only petty but also futile. The real significance of the 1909 expedition was in making the planet's largest and most spectacular natural bridge known to the outside world.

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NOTES

1. Navajo Mountain political leader and historian of Navajo culture Harold Drake (interview, 8-21-85) stated that Hoskininni's group first lived at Paiute Farms, Utah, and included both Navajos and Paiutes. They were attached "in 1842" at Nokai Canyon, by "Spaniards" (Mexicans). During the Carson campaign, they moved first to Piute Mesa, then to Piute and Desha canyons. According to Drake, members of Hoskininni's group included One-Eyed Salt Clansman, Nasja, and Nasja Begay. Members of the Tl'izi Lani (Many Goats Clan) fled to Black Mesa.
2. Kluckhohn (1927:115) wrote that Mrs. Wetherill "interested Dr. Cummings in organizing an expedition to search for it [the bridge]." Malcolm Cummings (1959:15) said that John had asked Cummings whether he would be willing to search with him. Judd (1968:32-34), stressing Cummings' initiative, stated that the Wetherills "promised the Dean [at his request] to continue their inquiries during the forthcoming winter and to engage anyone who clearly knew the way." John (1-28-24) also stated that "Dean Cummings suggested we make another attempt." Frothingham (1932:40) wrote that Cummings "wanted his old friend Wetherill to organize an expedition....John was more than willing but, having appealed in vain to Nasjah Begay, was at wit's end." It is probable that both Wetherill and Cummings were eager.
3. The editors that published Douglass' (1955:8-9) report reproduced a photograph, "taken by the author in 1908 from a triangulation point on the top of Navajo Mountain," in which the bridge is visible if one knows where to look. But if Douglass did reach the summit of Navajo Mountain, he failed to notice the rock rainbow. Correspondence regarding the 1908 attempt not cited in the text includes W. Douglass 11-15-08, 11-26-08, 12-15-08, and 3-3-09; and Demerett, 11-15-08.
4. Comfort (1980:63) and Frothingham (1932:40) concurred that Wetherill arranged for the joining of forces; see also Cummings (1952:40). Although apparently working under the aegis of the Utah Historical Society, Cummings' expeditions were financed by Colonel E. A. Wall, a mining man, according to Young (Jones 1979a:3). Cummings was also sponsored (although not financially) by Edgar L. Hewett of the Archaeological Society of America, who held an excavation permit from the GLO. Douglass initially was unclear as to whether any permit had been issued and thought that if it had been, it was due to a misunderstanding of where the work was to take place (W. Douglass 2-27-09, 8-4-09, 9-13-09, and 11-24-09). On February 27, 1909, he wrote that he had heard "of a pseudo-scientific expedition, planning to excavate here [Navajo National Monument] in the summer" and urged that the Smithsonian Institution dig there in the spring, before it would be too late. On August 4, Douglass, who had just learned of the arrangement with Hewett, wrote that he had written and wired to the Commissioner of the GLO for permission to stop Cummings' work and removal of materials, and that he was also writing (William Henry) Holmes (Head Curator of Anthropology). On September 13, he informed Walter Hough, Curator of Ethnology, that due to Douglass' agitations, Cummings had ceased excavating in the reserved area, and "I feel confident he will not enter there again." In November, Douglass stated that Cummings was expected to return for more excavating but that "I am doing all in my power to stop him." He lamented that "Cummings as acted very unfairly toward me. He denied making excavations of any ruin I surveyed yet I find the statement untrue. He told me positively, as I was leaving Oljato in Sept. he would not excavate the surveyed ruins. Yet I had hardly gotten away when he sent down and excavated what I call 'the Gallery Ruin'.... Can't we possibly stop him? He will ruin all we are working for" (Cummings n.d.:136, after letters, some of which are now in the Judd collection, NAA; see also Fewkes (1911:26); Comfort (1980:60)). Judd (1909) attributed Douglass' attempts to have the permits cancelled as a ploy to get the Utah group out of the field before they found the bridge. They may, infact, have been partly inspired by GLO concern earlier in the decade relating to excavations by Richard Wetherill at Chaco Canyon (Brugge 1980:169-173).
5. According to Rogers (interview, 5-9-90), Wetherill told him that Cummings had been anxious to leave forthwith and to beat Douglass but that Wetherill had said they could not get hold of Nasja Begay immediately. Wetherill sent a boy from Oljeto to tell Nasja Begay to rendezvous with them on the trail, but Nasja Begay didn't catch up until the party was already at the bridge.
6. John Wetherill (1955:24) also said "a day." Cummings' "two days" may have included the remainder of the day of their return from the Tsegi plus the morning of August 10. In 1909, Judd (1909) wrote of their party "waiting three days," and departing because Wetherill's time was limited. In his 1-28-24 letter to Cammerer, Wetherill gave a telescoped version of events: "Everything was ready and the party was ready to start when word was brought to me that Dr. Douglass was on the road on his way to the Bridge and Dean Cummings suggested we waite [sic] until his arrival. We waited half a day for Mr. Douglass and the two parties started out together the next morning."
7. Seventy years later, Young recalled that it was Wetherill's habit to start an expedition about 3:00 P.M., so that if "something went wrong, he was [camped] only a few miles from where he could turn back, and correct it" (Jones 1979a:4).
8. Samuel Day II, son of a Chinle, Arizona, trader, contended that "I was with Wetherill on the first party that went to that bridge....I went over there the first trip Wetherill made....There was two boys from Salt Lake City. They were university

students, down there on a vacation.... Those two boys and I, we climbed the doggone bridge.... We built a monument up there.... The very first ones ever to get up on that thing, and when we built this monument made a little box out of rock and we all put a sheet of paper in there with our names and dates and so on...1909, I think.... (We) sealed it all up with stone.... I heard there was some fellow....took that sheet of paper....I could've killed them" (Fontana 1960). There is no independent evidence of Day's presence.

9. Douglass (1955:9) stated that he had left Bluff on the 9th. Frothingham (1932:40) wrote that the joint party "left Oljeto on August 10th." Judd (1967:32, 1968:25) said that the camp was west of organ Rock but in "Moonlight valley"; M. Cummings (1940:22) said it was at Organ Rock; B. Cummings (1952:41) wrote near the rock; Young (1909, 1911:16) stated that the rock was first seen the next morning. The most likely route--a road built by the Zahn Mining Company--passes west of the rock on the way to Copper Canyon and does not descend Moonlight [Oljeto] Creek; this is supported by the Utah Archaeological Expedition of 1909 "Sketch Map of the San Juan Drainage," "prepared by Byron Cummings and John Wetherell [sic]," reproduced in Turner (1962b), from a blueprint in the Arizona Historical Society's Cummings Collection. To minimize its load, the Cummings party took only two blankets apiece, minimal food, no tents (only ponchos), and no extra clothing (Young 1911:16; Jones 1979a).

10. See also, Douglass (1955:14) and Judd (1927:12). Cummings and Wetherill's map (Turner 1962b) shows a long northward loop in the trail in the vicinity of Baldrock Canyon, not the much more direct route of later years. This corresponds in part to a northward-looping trail that passes to the east of Cha Butte, reaches Baldrock Canyon, and returns up that canyon and a left-bank tributary to join the present trail, as shown in Turner (1962a:102). Chidester's (1969:211) reconstruction of the route is quite inaccurate in places. Stanley Jones (1979b), of Page, Arizona, and Harvey Leake, of Prescott, Arizona (personal communications, 1982 and 1983), endeavored to retrace the exact route, utilizing photographs taken on the 1909 expedition as well as on the Theodore Roosevelt trip of 1913. The present trail, leading directly from Beaver Creek to upper Baldrock Canyon, was not constructed until the early 1930s, by the Civilian Conservation Corps (Madeline Cameron, quoted by Harvey Leake, personal communication, 6-6-83). According to Turner, his Paiute guide Lehi pointed out in 1960 the spot at which Wetherill and his son Ben had previously and unsuccessfully attempted to create a shortcut by constructing a trail into Baldrock Canyon near Cha Butte.

11. On May 7, 1988, I rode the section of trail through the main baldrocks between Cha and Baldrock canyons, accompanied by Navajo guide Herman Atene, and on May 10, 1990, reconnoitered on foot most of what I supposed to be the rest of the route. The trail down the interfluve is through open country and very easy, and the "baldheads" crossing involves only about a half mile. There is one fairly wide ledge with a 30-foot drop-off to negotiate, and one steepish slope where it is prudent to descend dismounted, especially if one's horse is shod [as were those of the whites in the 1909 party]. Although the exact route was not always clear at first glance, the general direction was never in doubt. My unshod horse slipped and slid down a steep slickrock slope, requiring my involuntary dismounting, but only because my horse and I had selected the incorrect path. Nowhere else between Cha and Nasja canyons was the route dangerous or notably doubtful, though it contained two or three pretty steep sandstone slopes. Most of the explorers' anxiety seems to have been from fear of the unknown or desire to dramatize rather than a result of any major objective physical hazards. An earlier surmise of mine that Wetherill might deliberately have led the group through more baldrock terrain than was necessary was heightened by my May 1990 reconnaissance, which revealed a feasible but significantly shorter route (also shown near "Astabegahn" (probably, 'Asdzaa Bighan = "Woman's Home") Toby Owl's old hogan), which, after an ascent over a steep but short and passable rise of slickrock, descends a chute directly into Baldrock Canyon (Turner 1962a:102).

The party seems to have exited Baldrock Canyon via a left-bank tributary rather than by the present trail. Regarding the "stairway" attributed to the renegade Hoskininni, the existing (1988) steps appear to have been cut with a steel pick, and thus are unlikely, at least in their present form, to have been made in the 1860s.

12. B. Cummings (1952:41-42) and M. Cummings (1940:24) telescoped events, confusing Beaver Creek with Surprise Valley (but see Appendix). Wetherill recalled the camp as beng in "Baldrocks Canyon," a tributary already passed (Frothingham 1932:43).

13. The "Redbud Pass" referred to is not the "RedbudPass" traversed with Wetherill in 1922 by Charles L. Bernheimer (1924:109-110; see also Richardson 1986:51-56). Confusion about this led to some erroneous inferences about the 1909 route in Chidester's account (1969:221-22). Further confusion exists in that there is a tributary of Bridge Canyon known as Redbud Canyon, as well as a left-bank canyon with the same name (but also called Little Junction Canyon) at mile 8.2 on the San Juan River. B. Cummings' autobiography (n.d.:112), the placename in the original typescript is "Red Bird Pass"; "Bird" was later amended to "Bud."

14. The Wetherill version is that the Paiute told Wetherill that sight of the Bridge was imminent and that John told Cummings (Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:170). In a 5-20-83 interview, Michael Harrison told me that Wetherill had told him that when the critical curve was being approached, Wetherill called Cummings to come up to the head of the group.
15. Judd's camera has been said to have been a 9 1/2" x 4 5/8" Special Kodak 3-A, and a camera of that model, supposedly carried in the knapsack of official photographer Stuart Young is, with his negatives, a set of his 1909 photographs, his field book, and other relevant materials, in the Stuart M. Young Collection (No. 207), Special Collections Department, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff (young 1909a, 1909b). Research by Andrew L. Christenson (personal communication, 8-13-90) has shown that the Special Kodak 3-A model did not appear until 1910. Christenson was unable to identify Young's 1909 camera but determined that Judd's was a 3A Folding Pocket Kodak. The photograph that Young captioned "The Nonnezhosi from Where First Seen" (Young 1911:10) actually was taken down-canyon, closer to the bridge than the first viewpoint.
16. Judd said it was "near midday": Young (1911:17) stated that the Bridge was sighted "a little after 11 o'clock," although Malcolm Cummings (1940:24) said 3:00. Douglass (1955:11) asserted that Rainbow Bridge was reached at 11:00 A.M., but about 11:35 or 11:40 seems most likely.
17. This protest was inspired by a May 24, 1925, Los Angeles Examiner article (Larson 925:6), which Judd (1927:13) characterized as "an utter lie." J. Wetherill (6-1-25) stated that the only names erased prior to 1925 were those of Zane Grey (from 1913) and David Robinson (from 1916).
18. The route from Neetsin Canyon to Oljeto is unclear. The map in Turner (1962b) shows two routes between the two places, one via Shonto, Marsh Pass, and Narrow Canyon, the other around the heads of Piute, Nokai, and Copper canyons. Exactly where the latter could have crossed this rugged country is problematic.
19. The first published mention of the bridge, in *The Montezuma Journal* (Anonymous 1909g), reads: "Two of the party, Messrs Jude [sic] and Young came up yesterday and reported the finding of...another natural bridge which spans a deep canyon running out of Navajo mountain toward the south." The *Grand Valley Times* compared the Bridge to Augusta (Sipapu) Bridge at White Canyon and said that "Neal [sic] Judd, Donald Beauregard and Stuart Young...returned from the San Juan country Tuesday [Aug. 31]. They brought a pencil sketch and several good photographs of the new bridge" (Anonymous 1909e). The story may have been wired to Moab from Salt Lake.
20. In latest August or earliest September, Wetherill had guided Great Neck, Long Islanders, Arthur R. Townsend and his sister Eleanor to the bridge; thus, only about a month after the discovery, Miss Townsend (later, Mrs. Horace Green) became the first woman to traverse the trail that Douglass had said "no woman will ever take," and to reach the bridge's top (Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:170-183). In fact, Cummings (1920:19, 37) admitted that "For men and women who enjoy horseback riding and camping out, a trip to Nonnezoshie...is not a terrible undertaking"; and in 1910, Mrs. Wassworth and at least three other women made the trip (Mortensen 1955:216; Rainbow Bridge Register Book). Many, of course, did so in subsequent years.
21. According to the late Colorado River historian O. "Dock" Marston, who interviewed Douglass' chief packer Dan Perkins, Judd tried to get Perkins to prepare or sign a written statement supporting the Cummings version, but Perkins refused as it wasn't accurate (Marston, personal communications, August 7, 1972, and September 1973).
22. In his 2-2-19 letter, Douglass referred to Dr. Frederick Albert Cook, a colleague and, later, a rival of Robert Edwin Peary in the "great race" to be first to the North Pole. Amid great fanfare, Cook made what later were judged to be false claims of having reached the Pole on April 21, 1908. These claims were announced to the world on September 2, 1909, and Peary's claim of having reached the pole on April 6, 1909, was issued shortly thereafter. An entry in Peary's diary exemplifies the mentality current among explorers of that era: "What I see before me in all its sunlit savageness is mine, mine by the right of discovery, to be credited to me, and associated with my name, generations after I have ceased to be" (Herbert 1988:386-413).
23. Jim died on September 28, 1977, in Monticello, Utah. The family gave his "back-pay" blanket to Clarence Rogers (1983:158; interview, 5-9-90). In 1974, too, John Wetherill's nephew was privately complaining that "Neal [sic] Judd is claiming he was the first white man to see the Bridge but I want to give uncle John the credit. I was wondering if Neil Judd was even there for the first party to go to the bridge.... There is a picture of Dean Cummings, Neil Judd and uncle John in the Waywep [Wahweap] Lodge [at Lake Powell] and [the caption] states that Neil Judd was the discoverer of Rainbow Bridge[;] it burns me up" (R. Wetherill, 7-26-74). The \$5,000.00 1984 plaque was paid for by money raised by Jerry Jones, Public Information Officer, Navajo Generating Station, Page, Arizona. The plaque, which carries a 1974 photo of Mike, was made by Ray Adair, of Lehi, Utah, at the Wasatch Bronze Works there (Betz 1984b). It reads: "In recent years, it has been learned that a Piute Indian named Mikes Boy saw Rainbow Bridge before Nasjah Begay did. When the two white discovery parties were searching for the Bridge in August of 1909, one was led by Nasjah Begay and one by Mikes Boy. The two joined forces and

re-discovered the Bridge together.”

“About a decade before, Mikes Boy had shown Nasjah Begay where the Bridge was after having discovered it himself while herding horses. Three-quarters of a century later, the National Park Service honored the Paiute, now known as Jim Mike, with a ceremony here at Rainbow Bridge. In 1977, Jim Mike died and was buried at Blanding, Utah. His friends believed him to be 105 years old.” When they heard about the plaque being installed, some Navajo Mountain Navajos assumed that it was to honor Sharkie (various interviews).

24. Inscription House had actually been visited by Mormons in 1861, but this was not known to Cummings or Wetherill (Ward 1975:1-17). They did, however, see the inscription of that date, which they read as “1661.” Nevertheless, Judd (1954c:155) claimed that “we...were the first white men to see Betatakin, Inscription House, Ladder House, and other ruins. “repeating the claim in a 1967 letter (Judd 1967c).

25. Regarding trappers in the region, Richard F. Van Valkenburgh (1941:119, 176) wrote that “a Hermann Wolf or Wolff, (William E.) ‘Billy’ Mitchell, Fred Smith, and W. C. Seifert trapped for beaver in the 1850’s; Wolf was with the same men in Navajo Canyon in the 1860s. It is reported that they left inscriptions in both Navajo and Piute Canyon.” Mormon inscriptions from 1861 are known from upper Navajo Canyon (Ward 1975:1-17). An 1884 inscription by M. S. Foote and an 1881 date are reported from upper Forbidding Canyon by Jones (1976b:27). Knipmeyer (1989:33-36) gives some of these names, plus that of G(eorge M.) Miller in Aztec Canyon.

26. This would seem to negate the contention sometimes made that the narrow opening of Forbidding Canyon would not have been seen by men on the river until they had become committed to the swift water off its mouth and unable to beach to explore the gorge (cf. Dellenbaugh 1934). A sheer cliff immediately downstream would have prevented a return by land. Although a railroad-survey team had explored the lower mile of Aztec Canyon in 1889 (Stanton 1965:106-107), the first recorded visit to the bridge from the river was in 1921 (Freeman 1924:161-163).

APPENDIX: PERSONNEL AND PLACE NAMES

Biographical and Onomastic Information on Dramatis Personae

Baneed-i-cloy (Binii’ Diti’oi = Hairy-faced One). An elderly Navajo from Bubbling Springs Canyon; present at the Enemyway witnessed by Douglass and Judd. Husband of the woman who showed Betatakin to the archaeologists (Gillmor and Wetherill 1934:164-165).

Beauregard, Donald. 1884-1914, of Filmore, Utah; former Cummings student, archaeology buff, and member and artist of the Utah Archaeological Expedition. Became a recognized artist (Anonymous 1914).

Big (Mouth) Mike, same as Mike, Mikey, and, probably, Old Mike. Mike’s Boy’s father; named for his physical appearance. Apparently the guide to Clara Bernheimer Natural Bridge in 1927. A derogatory novelized history of a Paiute band by Bluff historian Albert B. Lyman (1986) depicts (probably fairly accurately) Big Mouth Mike as the leader of a dozen thieving, renegade Paiutes from the Blue (Abajo) Mountain area who temporarily settled near Navajo Mountain while the area’s Navajos had withdrawn during the Bosque Redondo exile of 1864-1868.

Blind Salt Clansman (Ashiichi Binaa ‘Adini or ‘Ashiichi Binaa’k’isi = Salt-Clansman’s-Eyes-They-Are-None Man). Same as Jayi Begay, One-Eyed Salt Clansman (q.v.)², and Sharkie.

Chief, Sam. Kayenta, Arizona, area Navajo medicineman; Douglass’ December 1908 guide (see B. Cummings 1952:16-18).

Colville, Clyde A. Deceased 1945. John Wetherill’s partner in the trading business; known to the Navajo as Bilagaana Nee = Tall Whiteman. Made an abortive 1908 search for Rainbow Bridge. Served as Douglass’ October 1909 chainman and flagman. Costen (or Case Etten) Begay. Same as Mike’s Boy (q.v.).

Cummings, Bryon. 1860-1954; head, Utah Archaeological Expedition; Professor of Ancient languages and Literature and Dean of Men and of Arts and Sciences, University of Utah; later, Professor of Anthropology, Dean, and interim President, University of Arizona, and Director, Arizona State Museum. Cummings was born in upstate New York and was educated at Rutgers University. A short but sometimes forceful man, Cummings, was called Naat’danii Yazhi, “Little Boss,” by the Navajo; he was referred to by university people as “the Dean” (Mott 1939; A. Cummings 1952; Tanner 1954; Judd 1954a, 1954b, 1954c).

Cummings, Malcolm Byron. 1897-1968, of Salt Lake City; son of Bryon Cummings and participant in the 1909 expedition. Later lived in Bonita, California.

Dogeye (or Duggai) Begay (Daghaa’i Biye’ = The Mustache’s (Whisker’s) Son). Of Paiute Canyon, Utah; Navajo wrangler and cook for the Utah Archaeological Expedition; later, a guide for tourist parties to Rainbow Bridge. Dogeye Begay’s father,

Daghaa'i, may have been progenitor of the Dugai family of Navajo Canyon and of the Whiskers family of the Navajo Mountain area.

Douglass, William Boone. 1864-1947. Douglass, who was originally from Indiana, received a law degree from Georgetown University in 1888. In 1889, he married third cousin once removed Alvira Lockett; they had four children (Spraker 1974:228, 325, 328-330). In 1909, he was a U.S. Examiner of Surveys, General Land Office, and headed the "government party" on the expedition; he later was a U. S. Cadastral Engineer and lived in Santa Fe. He was called "Man Who Hears Through A Rope" by Navajos, because of his use of a hearing trumpet. "Douglass represented the (Rooseveltian) Progressive ideology....He perceived unprotected ruins and resources to be at risk from the uncaring and malicious actions (of selfish citizens and).... believed he and professional peers were entitled to make rules...(Rothman 1991:20).

English, John R. 1879-1925, of Seattle, Washington; Douglass' head chainman.

Hosteen Luka. Same as Huddle Chusley (q.v.), etc.

Hoskininni (Hashke Neinih = He Gave Them [Sheep] Out Angrily). 1820s-1909 or 1912; Kayenta, Arizona, area Navajo headman whose band refused to surrender to Kit Carson in 1864 and fled to the Navajo Mountain area (Kelly d. u., n. d., 1953; B. Cummings 1952:1-6.)

Huddle Chusley (Aa'dilch'alf or Ha'dishch'alf = Chatterbox). Same as Hosteen Luka or Luca (Hastiin Lok'aa' = Mister Reed, named for his Navajo clan, the Reed People) and the Joker or the Laughter; possibly, then, Yidlohf, "Laughing At," and thus the progenitor of today's Laughter family of Paiute Mesa (Mary Shepardson, personal communication, 10-30-83); same as Charlie Salt, according to Drake (interview, 8-21-85), but this does not square with the name Luka (both Salt and Luka being clan names); a Kayenta, Arizona, area Navajo medicineman and sometime guide for Wetherill's dudes (B. Cummings 1952:10-15).

Jayi Begay (Jaa'i Biye' = The Ear's (or Coffepot's) Son). Same as One-Eyed Salt Clansman (q.v.) and Blind Salt Clansman.

Judd, Neil Merton. 1887-1976; crew foreman and packer of the Utah Archaeological Expedition. Judd, originally from Nebraska, was Byron Cummings' nephew (Edward B. Danson, personal communication, 1972; Joe Ben Wheat, personal communication, 5-31-83).

Keenan, John ("Jack"). 1853-1938, of Bluff City, Utah (originally of New York City); Douglass' flagman and cook; called "King" by B. Cummings (1952:41); see "F. J. Rogerson," below).

Mike, Jim, See Mike's boy.

Mike, Mikey, See Big Mike.

Mike's Boy (Sin'al (unetymological); Ghavoi = Cowboy; the v is pronounced in Spanish fashion). 1872-1977. Son of Big (Mouth) Mike (q.v.) and physically like him; Douglass' flagman and August 1909 guide. Although Jim is usually termed Paiute, M. Cummings (1940:22), Judd (1959:10), and Roosevelt (1913:313) called him Ute (a more prestigious designation). The distinction between Southern Paiutes and Utes is often fuzzy in southeastern Utah (Euler 1966:106), Jim Mike's son Billy (interview, 5-26-90) did not know where Jim was born but said that he had grown up in the Navajo Mountain/Monument Valley/Bluff area, and that Navajo Mountain "Paiutes" are really Utes that have "intermarried with Navajos" and who do not even speak Paiute (as it is spoken in the Fredonia, Arizona, area). Stanley Jones brought to my attention the "Affidavit of Jim Mike (1961) stated that he was a Ute. According to Clarence Rogers, and supposedly, tribal records, Jim was born on May 3, 1872, in Kanab, Utah, where he and his father were baptized Mormons by Chris L. "Lingo" Christensen, of Bluff City (the baptism took place in Tuba City, according to Jim Mike (Haymond and others 1972). He is said to have spent most of his early life in Piute Canyon and around Navajo Mountain, but as a young man he lived at various times in the Ute Mountain, Colorado, area and on Douglas Mesa in Monument Valley, Utah, where he kept stock; in the 1920s he moved to Bluff, where he hired out as a cowboy; he was very well liked and was considered truthful and highly trustworthy. Later, he moved to the Blanding, Allen Canyon, and White Mesa, Utah, area, where he kept sheep and horses. His wife was named Gegani; they had six children. He died in Monticello, Utah (Scher 1973, 1974; Ekker 1974b, 1976, 1977; Anonymous 1977a, 1977b, 1977c, 1977d; Galbraith 1977a, 1977b; Rogers interview, 5-9-90). He was briefly involved in the 1923 Paiute uprising near Blanding, Utah (Lyman 1986:200, 203, 204). Mike's Boy's supposed Navajo name is given in the literature as "Costen" or "Case Etten Begay." Possibly, this is K'ostiih or K'os Tin Biye', "Cloud Rains" or "Ice Cloud's Son," or Keeh 'Eit' ein Biye'. "One Shoe's Son," or even Hostiin Bive'. "Mister's Son"); these last two were thought the more probable by Billy Mike's grand-nephew Aldean Ketchum's Navajo wife and sister-in-law (interviews, 5-26-90). Jim's father was Big (Mouth) Mike (q.v.), Navajo Mountain historian Harold Drake (interview, 8-21-85) and his brother Buck Navajo (interview, 5-6-88) had not heard of Mike's Boy.

Nasja (or Noscha or Nashjaw) (Na'ashjaa' = Owl (in Navajo)). Father of Nasja Begay (q.v.); a Paiute resident of Piute Canyon. Probably the same as Nasja Soney (Na'ashjaa' Sani = Old Owl). A member of Hoskininni's (q.v.) band. Rogers

(interview, 5-9-90) thought Nasja was Navajo.

Nasja (or Noscha) Begay (or Nashjabega) (Na'ashjaa'Biye' = Owl's Son (Navajo)). Early 1860s-1918; son of Paiutes Nasja (q.v.) and Blind Woman, daughter of Nabotsin (Mary Shepardson, personal communication, 10-30-83), all members of Hoskininni's (q.v.) band; however, Richardson (1986:62) stated that Nasja Begay was Nasja's nephew and was the son of "Nasja Soney"; Nasja's descendents use the surname "Owl" today. Resided in Piute Canyon. Guided a number of post-8-09 parties to Rainbow Bridge (B. Cummings 1952:39-45). Herman Atene (interview, 5-11-90) stated that Nasja Begay was also known as Daaghaa'i, but this seems very doubtful (see Dogeye Begay). Rogers (interview, 5-9-90_ thought Nasja Begay was Navajo.

Old Mike. Same as Mike and Big (Mouth) Mike (q.v.)?

One-Eyed Salt Clansman ('Ashiihi Binaa 'Eit'ain = Salt-Clansman's-Eyes-They-Are-None Man). About 1794 to about 1907; same as Blind Salt Clansman, Jayi Begay, and Sharkie. Although some accounts imply otherwise, anthropologist Mary Shepardson, referring to her field notes in a 10-30-83 personal communication, wrote that the Navajo Long Salt stated that his mother's brother was known as Blind Salt and One-Eye Salt and that that individual discovered Rainbow Bridge and led Wetherill there; Blind Salt's father was Wolf Killer. I received confirmation from two other Navajo Mountain Navajos. Harold Drake, the individual in question's great, great grandson (mother's side), said (interview, 8-21-85) that his forebear was the Navajo discoverer; that he was, during part of his life, called 'Ashiihi Binaa'k'isi, The One-Eyed Salt Clansman; and that later he became entirely blind and was called 'Ashiihi Binaa 'Adini, The Blind Salt Clansman. He told the Wetherills--John, Drake Supposed--about the bridge, and died at age 113. Drake's brother, Buck Navajo, stated (interview, 5-6-88) that The Blind Salt Clansman, ultimately a resident of the Rainbow Lodge area at the south base of Navajo Mountain, was a perapatetic wanderer, usually on foot, and traveled all about. He was the discoverer of the bridge and was presumably the Wetherills' informant. Floyd Laughter (interview, 8-20-85) also said that Blind Salt Clansman was both the Navajo discoverer and the Wetherills' informant. According to John Wetherill's son Benjamin Wade (1946), Sharkie was from the Shonto, Arizona area. The name "Sharkie" is puzzling. I have seen the Navajo name "Charky," possibly from the Spanish charqui, beef jerky. Place names would seem to imply that Sharkie (and his father) used the upper Navajo Canyon drainage, where tributary canyons known as Jayi and Pinne-ettin or Binne Etteni are found (Bernheimer 1924:96; Miller and Breternitz 1958:4). A "Pinieten" (Binaa 'Eit'ain) was still alive as late as 1915 and apparently much later. Cummings (1952:25-34) claimed that the Navajo's name means "no sense," an apparently erroneous translation. However, doo 'ahashjaai does mean "you dummy"; cf., Jaa'i. pinieten was also known as Hosteen (Hastiin, "Mister") (Sombrero) Jones. Perhaps he was a son of Sharkie. Armsby (1927) mentioned an "Uslimdenastkin" as the Indian who told Wetherill of the Bridge; this name is apparently a badly misread transcription of 'Ashiihi Binaa 'Eit'ain.

Perkins, Daniel. 1887-1968, a Bluff City, Utah, stockman; Douglass' flagman and chief packer; Dan and George Perkins are mentioned in Perkins (1968:306, 314-15, 349-53). Dan later moved to Salt Lake City (Crampton 19961).

Pinniettin. See One-Eyed Salt Clansman.

Rogerson, Francis Jean. 1885-1953, of Monticello, Utah; Douglass' second chainman. B. Cummings (1952:41) erroneously gave the name "Mortensen" for Rogerson. M. Cummings (1940:22) also mentioned a "Chris Christensen: of Monticello; although the text also lists Rogerson, the caption of the expedition photograph lists "Christensen" but not Rogerson--all of which probably reflects a confusion on the Cummings' part between Rogerson, a Mortensen, and C. L. "Lingo" Christensen of Bluff City. Christensen and Rogerson are in the list in the register placed at the bridge on Nov. 9, 1923, by Judd (reproduced in part in Goldwater 1970:74). The names Francis Jean Rogerson as well as Christensen and Mortensen are attested to in Perkins (1968:306, 314-15, 349-53).

Sam Chief. Prominent Oljeto-area Navajo medicineman (Cummings 1952:16-18) and Douglass' guide in 1908.

Sharkie. See One-Eyed Salt Clansman.

Uslimdenastkin. See One-Eyed Salt Clansman.

Wetherill, John. 1866-1944; born to a Mancos, Colorado, pioneer family, John was one of five adventurous brothers. With wife Louisa (q.v.), John established Oljeto Trading Post in 1906, in partnership with Clyde Colville (q.v.). From there, initially, and from their post's new location in Kayenta beginning in 1910, John explored the surrounding country. He was outfitter for numbers of scientific and touristic expeditions and constructed the Wetherill Trail from Monument Valley to Piute Canyon for travelers to Rainbow Bridge and served as Custodian of Navajo and Rainbow Bridge national monuments. Navajos called him Haastiin Jaan - Mister John.

Wetherill, Mary Louisa Wade. 1877-1945. Born to a Mancos, Colorado, pioneer family, Louisa's actual maiden name was Mary Louise Wade, according to Comfort (1980:39); however, her middle name was Louisa according to her great-grandson, Harvey Leake (personal communication, 6-6-83) and most other sources. With husband John (q.v.) and Cyde Colvill (q.v.),

she operated Oljeto and then Kayenta trading post. She was much involved with studying local Navajo culture. Navajos called her 'Asdzaan Ts'osi = Slim Woman. On the Wetherills, see also Gillmore and Wetherill (1934:71); Anonymous (1946); Miller (1961). Whitehouse Begay (Biliilgal Biye' = His Horse Is White's Son). Douglass' October 1909 Navajo guide (B. Cummings 1952:8-9).

Young, Stuart M. About 1890 to 1964, Resident of Salt Lake City and a grandson of Brigham Young; student member, packer, and official photographer of the Utah Archaeological Expedition. After college, he was a mining engineer in Utah for 15 years, then moved to California, where he managed the Los Banos branch of J. C. Penney; he eventually became a department-store owner in Chowchilla (Anonymous 1961, 1964:1).

Geographical Names

Aztec Canyon, Same as Forbidding Canyon (q.v.). James W. Black (1930) originally applied the name in 1892 to Rainbow Bridge Canyon and the lower part of present Aztec Canyon because of Anasazi ruins there.

Baldrock Canyon (in Navajo, 'Ata' Bikooh = Canyon Between). A tributary of Nasja Canyon (q.v.); named for being between slickrock country on either side of the gorge. An alternative name is 'Atse Bikooh = First Canyon (beyond the road end at Cha Canyon). Also called Junction Canyon; Junction Creek flows down it. Barahoine. See Nonnezoshe.

Beaver Creek. See Cha Canyon.

Betatakin (Bitat' ahkin - House On A Rock Ledge). Anasazi cliff dwelling in Betatakin Canyon, a Tsegi Canyon (q.v.) tributary. Part of Navajo National Monument.

Bluff City. Now known simply as Bluff, this village on the San Juan River (q.v.) was founded by Mormon pioneers in 1880.

Bridge Canyon. Same as Rainbow Bridge Canyon.

Bubbling Springs (To Ha' nilhoshi? = Water Gushes Up). A spring in Bubbling Springs Canyon, a Tsegi tributary, now destroyed by arroyo-cutting. Judd (1927:16) rendered the name "Toh-anish-cushie," and Douglass' (2-27-09) map gives it as "We-ta-nish-u-shy."

Cha Canyon. San Juan River (q.v.) tributary between Trail and Baldrock canyons (q.v.). Chaa' is Navajo for beaver, and the watercourse here is called Beaver Creek on maps; Douglass (3-8-09) used this name in 1909 (also Birney 1929:217). Some present-day residents of Navajo Mountain say that there are no beavers there (although there are at Nasja Canyon, q.v.) and that it is actually Nasja Canyon (Na'ashjaa' Bikooh - Owl Canyon), named for the family of Nasja, who lived there; the last Paiute resident was the late Toby Owl, younger brother of Nasja Begay; note the similarity in pronunciation between chaa' and -jaa'. On the other hand, Nasja's name is sometimes said to derive from the name of the canyon he lived in (Navajo and Atene, interviews, 5-6-88, 5-7-88, 5-11-90). On a Douglass-drafted map published by Fewkes in 1911, this canyon is designated "Chatlh; Chaal, "in mourning," seems to make no sense here, and undoubtedly, Chaa' is meant. On the other hand, on the map in Turner (1962b) what appears to be Cha Canyon is labeled "Natan." Possibly, this is Nat'aa', "returning back," referring to the abortive 1907 and 1908 attempts or simply to the fact that this marked the last easily traveled country; another possibility is Naat'aah, "chief." Cha Butte lies between Cha and Baldrock canyons. See also Piute Canyon.

Chayahi Canyon (Ch'ayahi Bikooh = Underarm Canyon). Floyd Laughter (interview, 8-20-85) stated that "Underarm Canyon" was named for a man who used a crutch. As I understood the interpreter, this canyon is about "two miles" up Aztec Creek (see Forbidding Canyon) from the latter's junction with Rainbow Bridge Canyon; possibly, Cliff Canyon is referred to. If so, perhaps "Chayahi Ridge" (Luckert 1977: 59) is the interfluvium between Bridge/Redbud creeks and Cliff Canyon.

However, Black's (1930) statement indicates that Cliff Canyon was called "Broken Leg Canyon" and that "Under-The-Arm-Canyon" was Rainbow Bridge Canyon (q.v.). There is presently a Chayahi Creek and canyon tributary to Navajo Canyon (Longsalt 1973:169), and a Chayahi Flat and Chayahi Rim around its head (U.S.G.S. 1970a, 1970b). Buck Navajo (interview, 5-9-88) knew of only this Chayahi Canyon, which he supposed was named for a Paiute. Navajo Don Bennett (interview, 11-6-88), grandson of Ch'ayahi, stated that that individual lived in the canyon in question "about 1902." He confirmed the man's use of a crutch. Earlier Navajo explanations for this name refer to a Paiute who had a wound or sore under his arm (caused by the crutch?); (Bunte and Franklin 1987:69, 71-72). Bert and Kate Tallsalt stated that "'Under the Arm'...is on the south of Navajo Mountain," and that "it might have been true that sometimes the white men thought that the Navajos meant the Rainbow because they tried to point it out as beyond the arm, meaning beyond the 'Under the Arm' Canyon" (Baker 1974b).

Copper Canyon (Beesh Ha'ageed Ch'inili = Metal Mine Outflow). San Juan River (q.v.) tributary between Moonlight Creek (q.v.) and Nokai Canyon (q.v.). Named for minor copper-ore deposits.

Desha Canyon and Creek (Deeshnih Bikooh = To Be Moving The Arm (i.e., hardworking) Canyon). San Juan River (q.v.) tributary between Spring (Deep) Canyon and Trail Canyon (q.v.). Named for a one-time local resident. To Nelini, "Water Flows Along," runs down it.

Forbidding Canyon. The Colorado River tributary canyon to which Rainbow Bridge Canyon (q.v.) is tributary; also called "Forbidden Canyon." Aztec Creek (named for Anasazi ruins) runs down the canyon to the Colorado River (see Aztec Canyon). Hidden Valley. Name used by the 1909 party to refer to Rainbow Bridge Canyon (a.v.) where it is joined by a tributary presently unofficially known as "Horseshoe Canyon: (q.v.).

"Horseshoe Canyon." The Rainbow Bridge Canyon (q.v.) tributary via which the 1909 party reached that canyon; informally named for a horseshoe set into an outcrop near the canyon's head.

Inscription House (Ts'ah Bii' Kin = With-Sagebrush House). An Anasazi cliff dwelling in Neetsin Canyon (q.v.); also dubbed Adobe House. Part of Navajo National Monument.

Junction Canyon. See Baldrock Canyon.

Kiet Seel (Kits'iili = Fragmented House) A large Anasazi cliff dwelling in Long Canyon, a Tsegi Canyon (q.v.) tributary. Part of Navajo National Monument.

Marsh Pass (Bitat'ah Dzidal = White Streak On The Ledge). The gap between Black Mesa and the Shonto Plateau/Skeleton mesa, through which passes the route between Kayenta and Flagstaff; the mouth of Tsegi Canyon (q.v.) is here.

Monument Valley (Tseyan Deelzhah = Vertical-Rocks undulating Line). An area of spectacular mesas, buttes, and pinnacles; called Monument(al) park by the Utah Party.

Moonlight (Oljeto) Creek. A wash running north to the San Juan River (q.v.) from Oljeto (q.v.), for which it is named; Judd confused "Moonlight Valley" with the valley of Piute Farms Wash (q.v.).

Narrow Canyon (Tseyi' Hats'ozzi = Narrow-Area Rock Canyon). A canyon entering Monument Valley (q.v.) from the southwest in which Cummings made important archaeological finds. Also called Tsegi Hatsosi, Sagihotsosi, Tsagy-at-Sosy, Sagie-ot-soci, and other variants.

Nasja (or Owl) Canyon and Creek. San Juan River (q.v.) tributary between Cha and Oak canyons (q.v.); Baldrock Canyon (q.v.) is a right-bank tributary. "Nasja or Owl" creek is mentioned in October 1909 in Colville's diary, implying an established association with Nasja's outfit, presumably as a seasonal pasturing area; the name "Nasja Canyon" was first published by Douglass in 1911, in Fewkes (1911: map opp. p. 34); the name is also given by Bernheimer (1920:557). Some contemporary local Navajos say that the canyon in question is properly called Cha (Chaa' = Beaver) Canyon, whose name refers to the abundance of beaver here. Conversely, according to local resident Herman Atene (interview, 5-00-90) the true Nasja Canyon is what whites call Cha Canyon (q.v.). What whites call Nasja Canyon is, according to Atene, really Tsech'il Bikoooh, "Oak Canyon" (q.v.), named for the many oaks growing here. This canyon's upper part was named Surprise Valley by the 1909 Utah party. See Owl Arch.

Navajo Canyon. See Neetsin Canyon.

Navajo Mountain (Naatsis'aan = Earth Head). The sacred mountain from which Rainbow Bridge Canyon (q.v.), among many others descends.

Neetsin (or Nitrin, Nitsie) Canyon. The tributary of Navajo Canyon in which Inscription House ruin (q.v.) is found; however, the Navajo apply the name Nii'tsi'ii (Raw Face, after a local Paiute resident) to the entire Navajo Canyon system (Wheat 1967:260).

Nokai (or Naqui) Canyon (Naakaii Bokoooh = Spaniard/Mexican Canyon). A San Juan River tributary between Copper Canyon/No Mans Mesa (q.v.) and Piute Canyon (q.v.). The name (given as "Knock-Eye" on Douglass' map) refers to a skirmish here with Hispanos, said by Drake (interview, 8-21-85) to have occurred in 1842 (about 1840, according to Kelly n. d.:2).

No Mans Mesa. Between Copper and Nokai canyons (q.v.); named for its inaccessibility.

Nonnezoshe and variant spellings ((Tse) Na'nizhoozhi (Naats'iilid) = (Rock) Lies Side-By-Side Across (Rainbow)). Same as Rainbow Bridge (q.v.) and Barahoine. Early authors usually gave the Navajo term for Rainbow Bridge as (Tsay) Nonnezoshe (Notselid) or some variant thereof. The first-word is usually omitted --means "rock"; the third, also often omitted, means "rainbow"; the middle term means "bridge" but translates more precisely as "lies side-by-side across," implying log or plank construction, not a particularly appropriate term for an arch of massive stone and one that is never applied to a real rainbow. W. B. Douglass (10-29-09) explicitly stated that the term was used only for artificial bridges. (Na'nizhoozhi, "the (roadway) bridge," is the Navajo name for Gallup, New Mexico.) Perhaps John Wetherill coined what he thought the term should be. On the other hand, young Clyde Kluckhohn (1933:117) wrote that in the Kayenta, Arizona, area (Wetherill's post-1909 home), the Bridge's common name was "Nonnezoshe," with "Nadzelid" added in ceremonial contexts; the usual name in the Navajo Mountain area was "Tsay-nun-na-ah" (Tse Nani'a/hi), "Rock Extends Across"), a general term for natural bridges and one attested for Rainbow Bridge by 1927 (Moore 1927:281). The latter is the only term I have heard Navajos use, and the appellation Na'nizhoozhi was explicitly denied at Navajo Mountain (Herman Atene, personal communication, 5-9-88). The

Paiute term for “rainbow” is said to be barahoine or baroioine (Pogue 1922:1048). These terms used by Anglos may have been elicited from natives as suggested names. According to Miser and others (1923:521), however, the Indians have not applied either of these names to the bridge. W. B. Douglass preferred “Barahoine” to the “Nonnezoshe” favored by John Wetherill. Oak Canyon. Colorado River tributary between Nasja and Rainbow Bridge Canyons. Both oaks and cottonwoods grow in Oak Canyon, which has also been called Blackwater Canyon. Douglass (3-8-09) termed it “Scrub Oak Canyon” and “Se Chil Can.” (Fewkes 1911: map. opp. p. 34). Colville’s (1909) diary renders it “Cha-chill or Oak.” In Navajo, Gambel oak is called Chech’il (=Tsech’il, “rockplant”). Local resident Herman Atene (interview, 5-11-90) said that the real Oak Canyon is what whites call Nasja Canyon (q.v.) and that the present canyon is really Naghashi Bikooh, “Bighorn Sheep Canyon,” named for a rock formation resembling a bighorn. The Cummings group dubbed the part of Oak Canyon it crossed “Paradise Valley,” a name which did not stick.

Oljeto (or Oljetoh, Oljato) ‘Ooljee’to = Moon Water). This Monument Valley (q.v.) water source is named for moonlight reflections from the spring, as mentioned in mythology. At this spring, the Wetherills operated a trading post from 1906 to 1910. See also Moonlight Creek.

Owl Arch. A small natural arch next to the trail out of the southwestern side of Surprise Valley; named for Nasja (“Owel”). Called Owl Canyon Natural Bridge by Douglass (3-8-09:80). See Nasja Canyon.

Paradise Valley. Upper Oak Canyon (q.v.).

Piute Canyon. A San Juan River (q.v.) tributary between Piute Mesa (q.v.) and Spring (Deep) Canyon. Named for Paiute occupants. A Pah Ute Canyon appears on an 1892 U.S.G.S. (1892a) topographic map, but in roughly the position of Cha Canyon (q.v.).

Piute Farms Wash. Intermittent stream between Moonlight Wash (q.v.) and Copper Canyon; named for former Paiute farms (Bayoodzin Bikeyah) near the wash’s mouth at the San Juan River (q.v.), now Powell.

Piute Mesa. Extensive highland between Nokai and Piute canyons (q.v.); named for the latter.

Rainbow (Natural) Bridge (Tse(‘naa) Na’nf’ahi(gii) - Span Across or Tse Nani’a(hi) = A Rock Spans; Luckert 1977:11, 29,59; Young and Morgan 1980:730, 978). Same as Nonnesoshe (q.v.) and Barahoine. The world’s largest natural bridge and the goal of the expedition described in this paper. Since 1910, a national monument.

Rainbow Bridge Canyon (Tse Nani’dhi Bikooh = A-Rock-Spans Canyon). W. Douglass (10-29-09, 1955:9, 16; Fewkes 1911: map opp. p. 34) gave the Navajo name for either the Bridge or the canyon as “Say-be-ga-hot-suw” or “Schigehotsow, ‘rock with a hole in it’”--presumably Tsebiyi’ Hoodza, “Perforated-Area-Within-Rock” or, loosely, “Arch Canyon” (rather than Hootso, “Meadow” or Cienega”). Rainbow Bridge Canyon is “Nonnezoshieboko” (Na’nizhoochi Bikooh, “Bridge Canyon”), according to B. Cummings (1920; 1959:36); Judd added “Tsei” (Tse, “rock”) to the beginning of this place name. The canyon is also called Bridge Canyon, and Bridge Creek runs down it. See also Gregory (1916:45).

Redbud Pass. This is a narrow sandstone passage between two tributaries of Forbidding Canyon (q.v.), Cliff Canyon and Rainbow Bridge Canyon (q.v.). It is on the southerly route to Rainbow Bridge, publicized by Bernheimer (1924:109-110). B. Cummings (n.d.: 112) also applied the name to the entrance to “Horseshoe Canyon” (q.v.; see note 13; see also Hegemann 1963:227).

San Juan River (Tooh = River). A major left-bank Colorado River tributary running a short distance north of the Utah-Arizona border.

Surprise Valley. A wide portion of Nasja Canyon (q.v.) on the trail to Rainbow Bridge.

Tall Mountain (Dzil Neez = Tall Mountain). Tall Mountain or Zilnez Mesa is the highest portion of the Shonto Plateau between Tsegi Canyon (q.v.) and upper Piute and Copper canyons (q.v.).

Trail Canyon (‘Ada’ooldoni Bikooh = Blasted Out Downward Canyon). One of the San Juan River tributary canyons headed by the 1909 party, between Desha and Cha canyons (q.v.).

Tsegi Canyon (Tseyi’i = The Rock Canyon). The lengthy, complex, ruin-dotted canyon system whose mouth is at Marsh Pass (q.v.). Variant spellings include Tsagie, Sagie and Sega. See also Betatakin, Bubbling Springs, and Kiet Seel.

Tsegi Hatsosi. See Narrow Canyon.

Under (The) Arm Canyon and Ridge. See Chayahi Canyon.

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*Navajo

*Paiute/Ute

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Abbreviations: USNA, GLO = United States National Archives, Washington, General Land Office. Record Group 49, miscellaneous letters received. 1908-1909; USNA, NPS = United States National Archives, National Park Service, Record Group 79, Box 601, File 12-1-5, Pt. 1: NAA, PNMJ = National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, Papers of Neil M. Judd, Box 14; NAU. SMY = Special Collections, Cline Library, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Stuart M. Young Collection (#207); MNA = Stuart M. Young Photos, Accession 10, library, Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff; THL, PORM = The Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif., Papers of Othis R. Marston.

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